

As usual, I don't own anything.

This is the poll winning story from just before Christmas. However, it has been brought to my attention that there is another fic which is similar to this, which is an almighty coincidence. But the person who informed me of this can't remember who wrote the fic or the title – I've looked for this fic and have been unable to find it, so I'm going to go ahead and post it. If anyone knows of this similar fic, please let me know and if it is too similar, I will remove this for rewrites.

The Apprentice

Chapter 1

"There is one more visitor for you Mr. Potter," Madam Pomfrey said. She opened the door and a man a lot older than Dumbledore walked in and went over to Harry.

"Afternoon, Mr. Potter. I am Nicolas Flamel," the stranger said.

"You're the creator of the Philosopher's stone!" Harry said.

"So you did your research after all. Albus told me of what you and your friends did to stop the stone from falling into the hands of Voldemort. I am very impressed," Flamel answered.

"Professor Dumbledore told me that the stone is now destroyed and you will soon die," Harry continued.

"That is partly true, Mr. Potter. My wife and I have enough elixir of life for us to live another ten years, but after that, we will die. We will also die sooner if we do not take the elixir but I wish to pass on my knowledge first."

"Have you considered teaching then, Mr. Flamel?" Harry asked.

"Call me Nicolas. I taught Charms not long after I finished being educated at an Irish School of Magic. But I'd rather take someone on to be my apprentice and I would like that person to be you Mr. Potter."

"Call me Harry. What would I have to do?" Harry asked.

"During the summer, you would come to me three times a week and I will pass on my knowledge."

"I'm afraid I won't be able to – the Dursley's won't allow me to learn magic over the holidays; they didn't even want me to come here."

"Ah yes, I've heard about them. Under the terms of becoming an apprentice, you can choose to live with your mentor. Also, Muggles cannot override these wishes. As it happens, when I considered offering you this apprenticeship, I checked up on the legal issues surrounding the Dursleys. Did you know that you were not supposed to go to them in the first place? Your placement there is a direct violation of your parent's wishes. So, if you accept my offer and you will not have to live with them again."

"Really? I accept your offer of apprenticeship," Harry replied with a joyous expression.

"Thank you, Harry – I've been looking forward to getting an apprentice as eagerly as you. We will discuss further things after term finishes and you have your marks for the year. That will help me plan on what to teach you."

"Thank you, Nicolas," Harry said.

Expecting trouble from Dumbledore, Nicolas sent Harry a book on Apprenticeship Law so Harry did not end up talking himself back to the Dursley's. Needless to say, the day before term finished, Dumbledore summoned Harry to his office.

"Morning, Mr. Potter. Please take a seat," Dumbledore said. "Now, I understand you've become the apprentice of Nicolas Flamel, which will involve being taught by him at his home during the holidays. I'm afraid I cannot allow that – it is unsafe for you to leave your relative's home."

"As it happens, Professor," Harry began. "Under the Apprenticeship Act, I can choose to live with my mentor if an offer is made, which I accepted. Nicolas also found out the Dursleys' guardianship of me was illegal and he has petitioned the Wizengamot for full custody, citing reasons he has not gone into with me. So, as I understand it, if you try to send me to the Dursley's, Nicolas can have you up on kidnapping charges and by telling me that you won't allow me to

take on the apprenticeship, you are violating a sacred honour which comes about with such an offer."

Dumbledore was gobsmacked – he had not expected Harry to know all this.

"Mr. Potter – remember I told you that you lived because your mother sacrificed herself to save you? It created a bond which will protect you from harm if you can live somewhere where your mother's blood flows. The only place is with Petunia and or Dudley Dursley."

"So, if Aunt Petunia died, I would have to remain with Vernon and Dudley?"

"I'm afraid so."

"I don't think so, Professor. The Dursley's don't want me, they never did. According to Nicolas, they only took me in because you threatened to kill them and you promised them that they would get their hands on my inheritance from my parents after I turned 17. That in itself is illegal – the Dursley's will not get their hands on my money."

Dumbledore began to say something else but Harry interrupted him. "You may threaten to expel me, but Nicolas informs me that if you do, he will sign me up with another magical school – it appears that his name carries more weight than yours."

Harry left the room and went to Gryffindor Tower.

The next day, on the train home, Harry was sitting with Ron and Hermione in their usual carriage.

"What are you going to be doing during the holidays?" Ron asked.

"My parents are taking me to Italy for a few weeks," Hermione answered.

"Leaving the Dursley's forever and beginning an apprenticeship with Nicolas Flamel," Harry answered.

Both Ron and Hermione were flabbergasted. Harry decided to explain. "Nicolas has decided that before he dies, he wants to pass on his knowledge to an apprentice and for some reason, he chose me."

"Will he let you visit us?" Ron asked.

"We'll have to see how it goes and go from there," Harry said.

The train stopped at Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$'s – the guard let them out a few at a time as not to surprise the Muggles. Harry looked around – in one corner, he saw the Dursley's and in the other, he saw Nicolas with a woman he presumed to be his wife. Harry walked over to them.

"Ready, Harry?" Nicolas asked. Harry nodded and the three walked away as the Dursley's walked over to them.

"What are you doing with him?" Vernon demanded to know.

"Harry here has decided to become my apprentice, Mr. Dursley and as I told you before, your guardianship of him was illegal and as the paperwork you should have received, it has been declared null and void. Harry has also decided to come with me and I have gained guardianship of him, so get lost."

An hour later, Harry and the Flamel's arrived at their home.

"Alright Harry, before we do anything else, we need to have a talk." Nicolas said. The trio sat down at a table.

"I've had a look at your marks over the year. They are generally very good, except for Potions, but there are comments stating that it seems you are holding back. Can you tell me why?"

"Sir, it comes from my schooldays. Uncle Vernon would beat me if I came home with better marks than Dudley. He said I was bringing shame to the Dursley family by being better than them. Since then, I considered it safer to hold back. If they got wind of how good I was at magic, they might kill me if they considered me a threat. I never held back in Potions though despite Draco Malfoy and Snape doing their best to disrupt me."

Nicolas and Perenelle looked grim. Perenelle muttered vague threats aimed at the Dursley's under her breath and Harry could have sworn he heard her say something about trying out some new hexes on them.

"Very well Harry. Starting tomorrow for a week, I will be testing you on all these subjects to see how much you are holding back. You should know now that you will not be punished for bad marks – if there is a mark that warrants concern, we will take a look at the work which earned the mark and see what can be done to improve it."

"Nicolas," Harry began, "After Snape began giving bad marks for mine and my friend Hermione's work, we discovered a charm which would preserve the potion for a time which we planned to send to an independent Potions master for review of the marks. Dumbledore somehow found out and told us that such a thing was against the school rules."

"I've heard things about Snape's so-called teachings. Things used to be so much better at Hogwarts before Dumbledore took over. I am a certified Potions Master, so if you could retrieve the potions for me, I will mark them for you and make sure the revised marks are sent to Professor McGonagall to be entered into your records. If you contact your friend Miss. Granger, I will mark her potions as-well."

"A question sir, how come you chose me over Hermione or Ron? They contributed as much with the stone." Harry asked.

"A very good question Harry. Miss. Granger's marks, besides from Potions, are the best Hogwarts have ever seen since your mother was a student. Mr. Weasley however, barely scrapped a passing grade. I think some sort of influence is being passed to make sure he continues into the next year. I refuse to teach anyone who does not put enough effort into his studies."

"I know – Hermione and I have to threaten him before he does homework and even then, he rushes it." said Harry.

"As for Miss. Granger, I'm afraid the law will not allow me to take on a Muggleborn as an apprentice. I wanted to take your mother on as an apprentice when she was your age, but the Ministry wouldn't allow it."

Harry was silent. He didn't know what to say when it came to his parents. "Did you know my parents, sir? I don't remember anything at all about them. My relatives kept telling me they were drunks who died in a car crash. Hagrid told me when he gave me my letter that they were killed by Voldemort."

"I knew your father – your family were friends of mine for many generations and if they were plentiful today, I would have got them to look after the stone. Now, I have some basic rules to tell you.

"For the first two weeks, I ask that you get all your homework assignments done and over with. Then, afterwards, we will be spending three days a week, for six hours each, learning. I will be giving you occasional homework assignments to do and some of them will be tricky."

"OK Nicholas." Harry said.

"You will be permitted to send as many letters to your friends as you like and can receive as many as you like too. The grounds are open to you to practice your flying on. I understand you are the youngest Seeker in a century and are the proud owner of a Nimbus 2000 broom."

"Yes sir. I wouldn't mind the chance to be able to make my own broom someday." Harry said.

"I might be able to arrange something involving that Harry. One final rule, you can come and go to the village at weekends or any days you have free. All I ask that you inform either myself or Perenelle before you go though, so we know where you are."

"Yes sir." Harry said.

"By the time we're finished Harry, you will be able to make your own Philosopher's Stone." Nicolas said.

Please review, with thanks to those who do.

As usual, I don't own a thing.

Thanks for the support with this fic, I never expected it to get the number of fans it did..

With grateful thanks to alix33 for beta-reading this chapter for me.

Chapter Two

In her office, Minerva McGonagall looked through the exam results of her first years. Top of the class was Hermione Granger – she had never seen marks that good from a Muggleborn since Lily Evans, who would later go onto marry that James Potter.

What concerned her the most was Harry Potter's marks. She had great expectations from him, but in all his exams, he had got 60% although he had scored 40% in Potions, the minimum score required to pass. There were some comments on the Charms paper that Harry seemed to be holding back and was not too keen to look too clever. McGonagall had to agree with Flitwick there, in her classes, Harry seemed not too keen to appear too good. Both James and Lily excelled in Transfiguration while Lily was also excellent in Charms. It also occurred to her that from Harry's work from the first few lessons, he didn't seem to know a thing about magic. Hagrid had told her that he didn't know anything before he told Harry that he was a wizard.

Snape reported that Harry's conduct in Potions was abysmal, sabotaging other students' work, constant misbehaving and serving a record number of detentions, despite Harry protesting that he had nothing to do with sabotage or misbehaving. McGonagall believed him but without testimony to the contrary, there was little she could do about it. Sadly, no one would confirm Harry's side of the story but she did find it strange that all the accusations had come from Draco Malfoy. There was a rumour that he constantly threatened people with the wrath of his father and so anyone was frightened to come forward.

Her concentration was broken when an owl dropped a letter in front of her. She opened it and read it – it was from Nicolas Flamel. She had heard that he had taken Harry on as an apprentice. Her blood boiled as she read it. I told Albus about the Dursleys! So they were the cause of Harry holding back – he was in fear for his life. She continued reading, I keep telling Albus about Severus – he's taking

his grudge against James Potter too far if he's only just giving Harry a passing mark. At the bottom of the parchment, was a vial with a pensieve memory. The letter stated that it was Harry's memory of the Potions exam and it also included Nicolas' revised grade (86%). She put the memory in her Pensieve (which belonged to her late husband) and watched the exam. There was nothing wrong with that! She said to herself.

McGonagall stormed into Dumbledore's office where he was in a meeting with Snape.

"What do you think you are doing, almost failing Harry Potter on purpose?" she asked.

"Because that brat has no place at Hogwarts and if I had my way, he'd be left with those Muggles." Snape said.

"What's this all about Minerva?" Dumbledore asked.

"The fact that Nicolas Flamel has seen the memory of Harry's Potions exam and a vial of the potion brewed, and has concluded that his exam grade, along with the rest of the year's work was marked down on purpose. He has sent the memory and vial to the exam board to have it regraded accordingly. Also, the fears that Harry was holding back on his work was justified – he was in fear of his life from the Muggles if they found out he was too good at magic."

"Oh yeah, I bet. All that would have happened to him would be a lack of treatment like a king." Snape said.

"So you call owning clothing four times his size and looking like he was never fed being treated like a king? I'm glad Nicolas has taken Harry on as his apprentice – maybe he'll come back next year looking like a healthy boy! I'm going to make it clear to Poppy that if she helped you cover up the Dursleys' treatment of him, I'll be reporting her to the medical board for dereliction of duty." McGonagall turned to leave, "Oh, by the way, I'm arranging for Harry to retake his exams so when the results come by, they'll be entered into his file." She stormed out of the office leaving Dumbledore and Snape looking dumbstruck.

Over the next week, Harry completed his homework assignments. Once he had finished each one, Nicolas had a look at it to see if any of it could be improved upon. He did have to remind Harry that because the Dursleys no longer had any hold over him, he need not hold back and to do his absolute best. The homework Nicolas looked at after that discussion was a lot better.

"I won't let any student of mine turn in shoddy work Harry." He said.

"Vernon and Petunia weren't fussy on how Dudley's homework was, as long as it was better than mine." Harry said.

"Oh." Nicolas said. He wasn't saying anything, but Perenelle was planning some sort of revenge against the Dursleys. The Flamels put Harry on a balanced diet to help him put on some weight and to help his system adjust to regular meals.

"You said the other day that you would have liked to take Hermione on but the law prevented you from taking on a Muggleborn apprentice," Harry began, "Does it mean I'm a second choice?"

"Of course not Harry!" he said, "In a perfect world, I would have taken both of you on, you both show great potential. But as I said, the law prevents me from taking Miss. Granger on."

"Have you ever thought of any possible loopholes in the law?" Harry asked.

"What do you mean?" Nicolas asked.

"The law prevents you from taking her on as an apprentice? (Nicolas nodded.) The solution is simple, invite her around when you're teaching me – nothing can be done if she sees you teaching me. Also, who says I can't show her a book or two? And, who says I can't send her letters about the lessons? A couple of bits of work could find their way to her house via Hedwig, she could fill it out, return them to us. Also, going along with what you said about underage magic being undetectable in a Pureblood household, who is to know she is casting spells? For all the Ministry will know, is that the spells are being performed by us."

Nicolas thought for a moment. "You're right there Harry! I don't know why I never thought of it before. You say she's abroad on holiday

right now? (Harry nodded.) We'll invite her around when she gets back." Nicolas turned to leave the room but turned back. "Oh, while I remember, Perenelle would like to know what you would like to do on your birthday."

"We don't really need to do anything, sir." Harry said, suddenly becoming formal again, remembering his time with the Dursleys, "Since my parents died, my birthday has never been celebrated. Uncle Vernon says freaks don't deserve birthdays. Hagrid brought me my owl and he did make a birthday cake, although Dudley ate it."

"What came with you to the Dursleys from your old home?" Nicolas asked.

"As far as I know, nothing. If anything did, they either destroyed it or gave it to Dudley. I had no idea who my parents were, again until Hagrid told me or even what they looked like until he gave me a photo album just before the end of term. Aunt Petunia never had any photos of them in the house, or any of me. Because of my scruffy appearance, thanks to them, I was never allowed to participate in school photographs."

Nicolas had heard enough and left the room.

That evening, things were very peaceful at Number 4 Privet Drive. Vernon and Petunia were entertaining a couple in the hope of securing a very lucrative business deal.

"Without that freak to ruin things," Vernon said to Petunia and Dudley before the guests arrived, "the deal is a clinch. We'll have it done and signed by the News at Ten and this time tomorrow, we'll be the proud owners of a new holiday home in Spain."

Right now, the adults were enjoying brandy in the living room when a pounding noise could be heard from the front door. Dudley answered it, then Nicolas and Perenelle stormed into the room.

"What is the meaning of this?" Vernon demanded.

"The way you treated your nephew for one." Nicolas said, "Beating him if he came home with higher grades than your slob of a son, then locking him in the cupboard under the stairs. Giving him next to

no food, giving him your son's cast-off clothing, treating him like a slave!"

"What food we gave him, was more than he deserved. If I had my way," Vernon roared, "he would have starved. He was only worthy of that cupboard and by earning higher grades than Dudley, he was bringing shame on this family. We NEVER wanted him!"

Mr. Mason, the potential client, stood up. "Is this true Dursley?"

Dudley decided to open his big mouth. "Yeah it's true Mr. Mason. I used to push him down stairs and got paid for doing so, I turned everyone at school against him, Dad turned the teachers against him, Mum turned the neighbourhood against him! The little freak has no one and he goes to a school for freaks. He tried to grass on us but Dad made it go away. Dad – when is our slave coming back?" Nicolas, Perenelle along with Mr. & Mrs. Mason looked at the Dursleys with evil in their eyes.

"Until these revelations were made Dursley, I was going to sign the deal with Grunnings, even if your Japanese golfer joke was in very poor taste. But now, I'm going to take the deal to your rivals and I'll be getting them to take your workers on because after I'm through, no one will want to do business with Grunnings again. There is one thing I refuse to tolerate and that is child abuse." Mr. Mason said.

"What we did was not child abuse!" Vernon roared, "What we did was try to stop a child being a freak!"

"What you did was child abuse and there is no denying that! Where is your nephew now?" Mr. Mason roared.

"Young Harry is in my care now," Nicolas said, "I offered him a placement as my apprentice during school holidays. Right now, we're concentrating on making him look healthy and as soon as we can, we're going to buy him decent clothing."

"Oh no, you're not!" Vernon said, "Anything you buy for him, you will give to us for Dudley to wear."

"Shut up Dursley. Your hold over my student is over – he'll never be seeing you again. I may be old, but I can still pack a punch."

Mr. & Mrs. Mason had left by now. Vernon was going purple.

"No one talks to me like that!" he shouted.

Nicolas and Pernella pointed their wands at the trio and cast a series of hexes at them. After the Flamels left, the Dursleys were fighting the effects of very painful hexes which would wear off after 24 hours.

The following morning, Nicolas took Harry to the Ministry, to the Department of Education. He took his young apprentice to see Griselda Marchbanks.

"Ah, Mr. Potter," she said, "You're here to retake your first year exams. It has been claimed that Severus Snape rigged your Potions grade to a bare pass while in fear of your Muggle relatives, you held back on others."

"Yes Madam Marchbanks." Harry said.

"The exam papers, for obvious reasons are not the exact same ones as you took at Hogwarts, but still covers the first year curriculum. Lord Flamel, you may sit with me, if you please. Otherwise, you'll have to wait outside."

Harry took his seat and looked at the first exam paper – Transfiguration. Over the next six hours (with bathroom breaks), he finished all his written exams, then did the practical portion. The exams were all graded during lunch.

"You've done very well here Mr. Potter," Madam Marchbanks said, "You now have the second highest grades of your year, after your friend Miss. Granger."

"I told you that you could do it." Nicolas said.

"Thank you sir." Harry said.

That afternoon, Nicolas led Harry into a large room. There, they were greeted by a few adults, including a man who looked upon Harry like an uncle would his favourite nephew.

"Afternoon Mr. Potter, I am Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic." He said.

"Are you?" Harry asked, not knowing who the Minister was or what he looked like.

"Don't you know who I am?" Fudge asked, slightly hurt.

"Sorry sir, I don't." Harry replied.

"I apologize Minister," Nicolas said, "Harry was illegally placed with his Muggle relatives with the intent that he not learn anything about our world until he attended Hogwarts and then what he does learn be kept to a minimum. His relatives do know about magic, they just chose to deny it exists. I've been telling him what I can since he's been staying at my home."

"I apologize for my reaction there Mr. Potter," Fudge said, "I had no idea you didn't know much about our world. Anyhow, I heard that today, you were being sworn in as Nicolas Flamel's apprentice and thought I would officiate."

"Thank you sir." Harry said.

"No problem at all." Fudge said, in a cheerful tone, "Shall we get started?"

Fudge and the two other people went behind a desk while Nicolas and Harry stood in front of it.

"Becoming an apprentice is a very honourable deed," Fudge began, "It is even greater if the master or mistress is someone well versed in their field. Harry James Potter, you have been chosen to become the apprentice of Nicolas Flamel. Do you accept this responsibility?"

"NO HE DOESN'T!" a loud voice could be heard from outside and Dumbledore came in.

"What is the meaning of this?" Fudge asked.

"Harry does not wish to become Nicolas' apprentice. His relatives do not give their consent to him becoming an apprentice and as his

magical guardian, I have decided that he does not want to become an apprentice. He needs to return to his relative's home and away from all things magic, to keep him safe from the Death Eaters." Dumbledore said.

"As it happens Minister," Nicolas said, "Albus violated the terms of James and Lily Potter's wills by placing him with the Dursleys, it stated that he was not to go anywhere near them and that magical guardianship was to go to either myself and my wife or Sirius Black. Since Mr. Black is in Azkaban, myself and my wife should have been Mr. Potter's legal guardians. Harry is not safe with the Dursleys, he actually fears for his life and on one or two occasions, they have almost killed him. My wife and myself visited them yesterday and they freely admitted starving him, making him live in a cupboard under the stairs, forcing him through violence to hold back at school, as not to tarnish their name by being better than their son, who, as a matter of fact, admitted to frequently pushing him down stairs, organising 'Harry Hunting' parties which would end in violence and finally having turned everyone who could have helped him against him, including law enforcement, teaching staff and neighbours. Frequent bribery was mentioned. When I spoke about buying decent clothing, all that he owned were hand-me-downs from his cousin, who is very huge, Vernon Dursley told me that we were to give the stuff to them for his son to wear. They also spent years telling him that James and Lily were drunk good-for-nothing freaks who got themselves killed in a Muggle car crash, and he didn't even know their names until Rubeus Hagrid told him a year ago when Harry's Hogwarts letter was delivered."

"Is this true?" Fudge asked. Harry reluctantly nodded. Nicolas handed over a copy of the will to Fudge who read it.

"Minister Fudge," Nicolas continued, "Under the Apprentice Act, Muggle guardians do not need to give consent for someone to become an apprentice. Before I offered the opportunity to Mr. Potter, I checked into the legal side of things and along with the will, I found I was in my full legal right to offer him this apprenticeship. Under his rights under the Act, Harry chose to spend the holidays with me."

"Very well. The objection by Albus Dumbledore is rejected. There is no evidence to show that Harry's interests would be filled by returning to the Muggle world." Fudge said.

"Harry – I plead with you to reconsider," Dumbledore said, "The wards around the Dursley household are now down and they are open to attack from anyone."

"I don't care about them Headmaster." Harry said, "Now, if you don't mind, we have a swearing in ceremony to finish."

Fudge continued. "Harry James Potter, do you accept the responsibility of being an apprentice?"

"Yes, I do. I accept Nicolas Flamel as my master and myself as his apprentice." Harry said.

"Congratulations Mr. Potter," Fudge said, "You are now the apprentice of Nicolas Flamel." On Harry's robes (brought for the occasion), the crest of the House of Flamel appeared with a small banner saying 'Apprentice' on them.

"Thank you Minister." Harry said.

"You're making a mistake here Harry." Dumbledore said, "The wards around Privet Drive are now down, you must go there until term begins to recharge them."

"I never considered that place home Headmaster," Harry said, "It was more a prison to me than a home. I consider Master Flamel's house my home now."

He and Nicolas walked out of the room, leaving Dumbledore stunned.

s usual, I don't own anything.

I apologise for the amount of time it's taken me to write this chapter, but I want The Apprentice to have nice long chapters, longer than what I normally write.

Chapter Three

"What sort of rubbish is Hogwarts teaching these days?" Nicolas wanted to know. He was looking at The Standard Book of Spells, Grade 2, "When I was your age, we were learning switching and summoning spells!"

Harry looked at him, not knowing what he was talking about.

"I bet you anything that Lucius Malfoy and the pureblood brigade are trying to make things way too easy for everyone."

"The summoning spell will be today's lesson. The incantation is Accio." He pointed his wand at a book on the table next to Harry. "Accio book." The book went flying into Nicolas' hand.

"With practice, you can summon an item straight into your hand." Nicolas explained, "Now you try it."

"Accio book." Harry said, pointing his wand at the book in Nicolas' hand. The book shuddered a little but didn't move.

"Not a bad reaction for a first go Harry." Nicolas said, "Don't feel discouraged."

For the next hour, Harry tried again and again, pointing his wand at various objects but he had no luck. Perenelle walked into the room carrying a small chocolate cake.

"I thought you would like a treat Harry," she said, "We must fatten you up."

She picked the wrong time to enter the room as Harry cast another summoning spell. Suddenly, the cake flew off the tray and landed with a splat. Perenelle hid a smile and Harry turned around to see Nicolas, whose face was covered with chocolate cake.

"That's the basic idea Harry, but don't try to put too much power into the spell otherwise it might backfire." Then he started to laugh.

Among the spell-work lessons, Nicolas also gave Harry lesson in alchemy. In the first lesson, he was holding a Muggle book.

"Forget what books like these tell you about alchemy and the process of turning metal into gold, it's a whole load of rubbish!" he said, "it's just something Muggle writers dream of just to make themselves look good."

"Ron – have you written to Harry to invite him to stay?" Molly Weasley asked.

"I've written to him a dozen times." Ron said to his mother, "But there's been no reply. He's not sent me anything either."

"I'll write to Nicolas Flamel and give him a piece of my mind. He shouldn't be stopping Harry from being in contact with his friends."

At breakfast the following morning, an old owl came and delivered a letter from Molly Weasley.

"Harry," Nicolas said, "Why did you not tell us Ron Weasley had invited you to stay? His mother's thinking I'm keeping you from your friends."

"He's not sent me anything," Harry said, feeling sad, "No-one's sent me any mail at all. I've not even received the Hogwarts book list for the year."

"Would you like to spend a week at their home? Your homework is all done and you've made a good start as my apprentice. It will give you a chance to have a breather and a bit of rest."

"It would be nice please," Harry said, "Ron was my first friend, the Dursleys made sure I didn't have any growing up."

"I've only heard you mention Mr. Weasley and Miss. Granger. Don't you have any other friends?" Perenelle asked.

"No. I turned down Draco Malfoy's offer of friendship because he acted like Dudley. If Hagrid wasn't staff, he would be a friend. Hermione and I lost a hundred points because we tried to save Hagrid from getting into trouble when he tried to raise a dragon, the school turned against us. Then, after we prevented Voldemort from taking the stone, I seemed to be popular again. But no-one tried to be friends."

Arthur Weasley walked into his house holding a copy of the Daily Prophet.

"Ron – what do you know about letters written by you to your friend Harry being printed in the Prophet?" he asked. He dropped the paper on the table and everyone could see several of Ron's letters to Harry printed in full. There were also some of Harry's letters on show for both Ron and Hermione.

"That's nothing to do with me!" Ron shouted, "I bet Harry's doing it for more glory."

"No, my apprentice has not been leaking letters to the newspaper. We don't even receive it here and he's not received letters from your son." Nicolas said. He was talking to Molly Weasley in some fashion. Harry was surprised to see a woman's face in the fire, "The fact letters from both concern me, I will investigate things at once."

"What was that?" Harry asked, seeing Nicolas finish.

"That is the Floo network Harry. Our world can communicate via fire in a similar fashion to the Muggle telephone. We can also travel via the Floo network to anywhere else that has a connection to the Floo network, unless it is warded against unauthorised visitors. Now, it appears letters sent by you to your friends are being printed in the Daily Prophet and letters from Ronald are also being printed. He denies leaking them to the paper himself. I will perform a test on you."

Nicolas took out his wand and waved it across Harry. He looked at the results.

"It seems a mail diverting charm has been placed on you. It is programmed to send any letter you send to a Rita Skeeter. It is also

programmed to send any letter addressed to you to her." Nicolas waved his wand over Harry and he glowed. "I have removed the charms. If you will excuse me, I will deal with this."

At the offices of the Daily Prophet, reporter Rita Skeeter was giving a couple of rolls of parchment to her editor. Then Nicolas came in.

"What can I do for you?" the editor asked.

"I want to know by what right Rita Skeeter has placing mail diverting charms on my apprentice Harry Potter. Because of these charms, he has not been receiving his mail and any mail he sends has been diverted to Rita here." Nicolas said.

The editor looked like he was going to spit razor blades. "You told me that you were given these by the Weasley boy!"

"He's the Boy-Who-Lived!" Rita protested, "It's in the public interest to know what is in his letters!"

"At the expense of Harry not having friends over it or not even receiving his Hogwarts letters?" Nicolas said. Rita didn't say anything.

"This is what will happen," Nicolas said, "You will fire Rita Skeeter for illegal use of mail diverting charms. Then, in tomorrow's paper, you will print a full apology, not only to my apprentice but also to the Weasley family. If it does not, I will take legal action. Good day to you."

The following article appeared in the Daily Prophet the next day.

AN APOLOGY TO HARRY POTTER AND THE HOUSE OF WEASLEY

Readers may be aware of the publication of letters between Boy-Who-Lived Harry Potter and his best friend Ronald Weasley. Our reporter told us that they were donated by Ronald Weasley. It has been discovered that this was a lie.

As some of you may know, Harry Potter is the apprentice of Nicolas Flamel who discovered that Prophet reporter Rita Skeeter placed

mail interception charms on Mr. Potter at Kings Cross Station at the end of term. Unless being used by the Auror service in a criminal investigation, they are illegal to use.

Rita Skeeter has been fired from her post at the Daily Prophet for her use of illegal charms and we have informed the Auror service of her infractions.

We wish to apologise to both Mr. Potter and the Weasley family for this obvious breach of privacy.

The Weasleys were a lot happier following the apology. The editor of the Prophet had given them Rita Skeeter's wages for the month, totalling 150 galleons along with 500 galleons compensation. It meant no second hand items for them this year.

Two days later, Harry had managed to master the summoning charm and had managed to summon Perenelle's chocolate cake without sending it flying into Nicolas' face. He had also mastered switching spells, many duelling and defence spells and had mastered several fifth year potions.

"I've heard a rumour that Dumbledore has hired Gilderoy Lockhart as the Defence teacher this year," Nicolas explained, "from what his books, he appears to be a fraud. What I am teaching you will help you pass the exam, assuming he doesn't give you any questions about himself. I want you to keep an eye on Lockhart and report back to me anything that he does wrong. I have a bit of influence and hiring a fraudulent teacher which disrupts the learning of an apprentice while at school can be a serious offence."

"I can't believe that idiot's set his entire published works – some families are going to struggle with this." Perenelle said.

"We're going to meet the Weasley family at the Leaky Cauldron," Nicolas said, "While as your Master, I will be paying for your supplies but you may take some money out of your vault to buy any personal items you may wish. Have you got your key?"

"No sir," Harry said, suddenly getting formal, "Hagrid had it but he didn't give it to me afterwards."

"That is serious. By withholding your key, he is committing an offence. He was probably doing it on Dumbledore's orders so it'll be best not to press charges against him. We'll have the locks changed on the Potter vaults and order an immediate audit on the contents, to make sure Dumbledore hasn't been getting sticky fingers."

After explaining how the Floo worked, Nicolas flooed to Diagon Alley followed by Harry then Perenelle. They saw the Weasley group and walked over.

"Harry, this is my mother and father." Ron said. Harry shook hands with them. "And this is my little sister Ginny." He indicated a shy girl hiding behind Mrs. Weasley.

The group walked into Diagon Alley and headed towards the bank. While Mrs. Weasley took Ron and Ginny to the Weasley vault (which was now healthier thanks to the 750 galleon compensation package from the Daily Prophet), Nicolas took Harry to one of the tellers.

"Good morning Master Flamel. What can Gringotts do for you today?" a goblin asked.

"My apprentice would like the locks on all the Potter vaults changed and he would also like to know if anyone besides himself have been in the vaults since October 31st, 1981 please." Nicolas said.

"Very well. I will need a drop of blood on this parchment to prove Mr. Potter is who he says he is." The goblin said. With a goblin dagger, Harry pricked his finger and dripped a drop of blood on the parchment. The goblin took it away and ten minutes later came back with a new set of keys.

"I thought I only had one vault?" Harry asked.

"No, the Potters have several vaults, but you can't access them until your 17th birthday. The only reason your locks are being changed is because you are in a Master/Apprentice relationship with Master Flamel and he can authorise such things. According to our records, Master Flamel, Albus Dumbledore has made several attempts to access the vaults since October 1981 but has been unsuccessful due to James Potter's security requirements." The goblin said.

"Thank you," Nicolas said, "we would now like to go down to my own vault and Harry's trust vault."

They met up with the Weasleys half-an-hour later and they went to do their shopping. Ron, Percy, Ginny and the twins all got brand new robes and supplies. Then there was the disastrous trip to Flourish and Blotts. After Gilderoy Lockhart gave Harry his complete published works, he gave them to Ginny Weasley, thinking that the money the Weasleys would save on this particular set would help then the group had to bump into the Malfoys of all people.

"I think it is a waste, taking Mr. Potter on as your apprentice," Lucius Malfoy said, "Considering he barely made it through the first year. My son, however, would be a better choice."

"Considering your best friend Severus Snape fixed grades, I will not be changing my choices, Lucius." Nicolas said, "My apprentice retook all his exams and without anyone to force him to hold back or biased teachers rigging grades, he ended up second of his year. Good day to you, sir."

Then Lucius decided to make a few jibes about the Weasleys either stealing the money or selling Ginny into a marriage to be able to buy the new stuff and he and Arthur Weasley ended up in a major punch-up. Nicolas and Hagrid (who was there to get some supplies for his job) managed to break them apart before Lucius could cast the Cruciatus curse.

"He's not worth it Arthur." Nicolas said before pulling him away.

The group left, leaving the Malfoys speechless. They went back to Madam Malkin's to pick up Harry's new Hogwarts robes, which now had the Apprentice symbol on them – Nicolas had explained that it was a legal requirement and it would also prevent interference from Dumbledore and Snape.

Before everyone left to go home, Nicolas and Mrs. Weasley had a conversation.

"Harry – you're going to the Weasleys for two weeks towards the end of the holidays. You will have earned the time off but I will give you a few assignments to do while you're there." Nicolas said.

"Thank you Mrs. Weasley." Harry said.

"No problem dear." Mrs. Weasley said.

Before everyone went their separate ways, Nicolas took an old looking book out of Ginny's cauldron. He explained he had seen Lucius Malfoy slip it in after the fight and would investigate it for dark magic.

The next day, Nicolas informed Harry that their lesson for the day would be what he and Perenelle called 'Dursley Tormenting'. At first, Harry thought it meant using the Dursleys to practice curses and hexes on but was stunned to find themselves in an expensive clothes shop.

"Why are we here?" Harry asked.

"You need new clothing, especially Muggle stuff that fits you. Thanks to a few listening charms, we found out Vernon and Petunia were taking Dudley here to buy new clothes today."

They had walked over to a sales girl. "My grandson here is in need of a complete new wardrobe. Pay particular attention to the sections that family (pointing at the Dursleys) are at, but the size my grandson needs please."

"I'll do what I can for you sir." She said. The girl went all over the store to find the best clothing, even stunning Vernon and Petunia when she took clothing and shoes from the same sections they were looking at.

One by one, the clothes were tried on and the ones Harry liked were put in a pile while ones he wasn't too keen on went on another pile.

"YOU!" Vernon Dursley shouted, "I thought I told you that you were never to come into this store!"

"You have no control over me anymore, Vernon. I can go anywhere I like and there is nothing you can do about it." Harry said. Vernon started to go purple.

"Is that is it sir?" the girl asked Nicolas.

"Yes is it thank you miss." Nicolas answered. He helped her take the clothes to the till so the prices could be rung up. He asked the girl to contact security, but discreetly.

"You will give those clothes to Dudley NOW! Freaks like you don't deserve clothing like this."

"These will never fit that pig of a son of yours." Harry said, rather enjoying the 'Dursley Tormenting'. He felt it was worth it to see Vernon's face go purple. As the girl bagged up the clothing, Nicolas gave the bags to Harry. Vernon and Dudley tried to snatch them from him. Dudley succeeded in snatching one bag but Harry snatched it back. The spoilt brat started with his fake crying.

"HOW DARE YOU SNATCH SOMETHING OUT OF DUDLEY'S HANDS!" Vernon shouted at the top of his voice. Everyone stopped what they were doing and watched what was going on.

"DUDLEY SNATCHED IT FROM MY HAND FIRST! DON'T FORGET YOU TRIED TO SNATCH IT FROM MY HAND TOO!" Harry shouted, determined to show he was no longer frightened of the Dursleys, "WHY DON'T YOU GO AND DO YOUR SHOPPING AND LEAVE US IN PEACE!"

And with that, Harry turned and walked away. The Dursleys looked open-jawed as the final tally was rung up – just over £1,250. Nicolas also gave the girl on the till a very generous tip for her help.

"DAD!" Dudley said, with the fake tears, "I want that stuff! Get that stuff off the freak for me! He doesn't deserve it, only my old clothes!"

Before Vernon could do anything, the security guards came over and warned them off. Nicolas, Perenelle and Harry walked out peacefully.

The second part of the 'Dursley Tormenting' came that evening. Nicolas and Harry made a trip to the garden of Number 4, knowing the Dursleys were inside. Harry was dressed in the best clothing purchased in the shopping trip that day and they were piling up the 'Dudley hand-me-downs'.

Inside, Dudley could see something.

"Hey! That freak's in the garden! Let's go get him Dad!" he said. He, Vernon and Petunia went into the garden to find Nicolas setting fire to the clothes.

"What are you doing to those? The freak needs them to wear!" Vernon shouted.

"I don't need them anymore!" Harry shouted, determined to show his bravery, "I would have just given them back to you, but I don't think any amount of washing would get rid of traces of my 'freakishness'. So we thought we'd burn them and eliminate any chances of precious Duddley-kins getting contaminated!"

Vernon and Dudley were going purple. Harry then unwrapped a huge slice of chocolate cake that Perenelle gave him before they left and waved it near Dudley before eating it.

"BOY! HOW DARE YOU EAT CHOCOLATE CAKE! FREAKS LIKE YOU DON'T DESERVE IT! GIVE IT HERE!" Vernon ordered. Harry ignored them, unwrapping another slice and eating it. He washed it down with very expensive fizzy drink.

"Time to go Harry." Nicolas said. Harry tossed the empty bottle over to Dudley who caught it. Then both Harry and Nicolas vanished via apparition. Dudley started to drool over the bottle, it was very expensive. How dare the freak drink this stuff! He said to himself.

"THIS ISN'T THE END POTTER!" Vernon shouted, "WE'LL GET YOU ONE DAY!"

There was a different lesson the following day. Nicolas led Harry into a spare room where he put down the book he took from Ginny Weasley at Diagon Alley.

"This book is filled with Dark Magic," he explained, "It was lucky we found it when we did, otherwise the consequences would have been dire."

"What would have happened?" asked Harry.

"I'm only telling you this so you know what sort of Dark Magic there is," Nicolas said, "This is a soul fragment, known as a Horcrux. This diary was owned by a Tom Riddle who committed murder to create this. He must have known Lucius Malfoy in some way for him to have had this in his possession. If Ginny Weasley had started writing in it, the magic behind the soul fragment would have taken her over and there is a chance the fragment could have used her life energy to come to life."

"How do we dispose of it?" Harry asked.

Nicolas cast a powerful fire spell at the diary. It began to scream as it was destroyed. He then turned to Harry.

"I want you to promise me you'll never try to make a Horcrux yourself." He said.

Harry promised not to and swore an oath never to do so.

"I'm not sorry to have forced that Harry, but I will not have you ruin your life to try to achieve immortality."

A couple of days later, it was Harry's 12th birthday. Mrs. Weasley and Perenelle had gone all out to arrange a party for him, his first since his first birthday with his parents. The Weasley family were there (including Ginny who was being very shy). Hermione was also there, having returned from her holiday the day before.

During the party, Nicolas gave Harry a roll of parchment which he unrolled. In big letters at the top of the parchment were the words:

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

Harry looked at Nicolas who decided to explain.

"Perenelle and I have spent many days discussing things and we have decided to adopt you as our own son. It will not affect anything

involving the Potter holdings but this means that after we adopt you, you will become our heir."

"How did you convince the Dursleys to agree to this? They would never agree to this, especially after what happened the other day." Harry asked.

"We didn't – they didn't apply for any rights over you so we are well within the law. As I told you before, your parents wished for either us or Sirius Black to be your guardians. With him in Azkaban, there is no-one else to contest it, so we are making it official."

"Thank you." Harry said.

Please review, with thanks to my beta alix32

This is my last chapter of Apprentice for a while because I am due in hospital tomorrow to have an operation on my leg. I will do what writing I can on this and my other stories while I am in there.

Chapter Four

"There is nothing I can do Lucius." Fudge said, "You should know that unless there is a very good reason, a Master and Apprentice relationship cannot be broken."

"My son Draco tells me that Potter's marks were rubbish and he frequently under performed in Potions." Lucius Malfoy said.

"There is evidence that Severus Snape altered Mr. Potter's marks and the rest of his marks were due to fear from his relations. Mr. Potter has retaken his exams and has proven his worthiness to be an Apprentice, so there will be nothing done about it."

Harry came down for breakfast a few days later to find Nicolas having a floo conversation with Molly Weasley. Harry wasn't sure if his eyes were deceiving him or something, but it looked like a shield was surrounding the fireplace. Nicolas finished the conversation and turned to Harry as Mrs. Weasley's head vanished from the fire.

"Bad news Harry," he said, "Both Ron and Ginny have caught some sort of illness and it's contagious. We're going to have to put off your trip to the Burrow until they are both better and there is no trace of it anywhere. What you saw was a shield charm to prevent the virus coming through the floo to our home."

Harry's heart dropped – he had been looking forward to the visit and now it had been cancelled. He knew it wasn't anyone's fault but it was still disappointing.

"We'll make it up to you Harry. Molly says that if they don't get better before school restarts, you can spend some of the Christmas holidays with them."

"There is no need to make it up to me. I don't want to feel like Dudley." Harry said quietly.

"There is no question of making you feel like Dudley," Perenelle said, "Your cousin has been ruined by your aunt and uncle. Didn't you tell

us that last year, after being disappointed at getting one less birthday present than the year before, they brought him an extra two to make up for it? That he faked a temper tantrum because they couldn't find a babysitter for you and you had to go to the zoo with them?"

Harry nodded.

"The two of us making things up to you for your disappointment at not going to the Burrow is completely different. You are not spoilt or ruined, there was a nice treat lined up for you but because Ron and Ginny are ill, it has to be postponed."

"I understand that and I know it's not their fault," Harry said.

"I'm pleased you do Harry," Nicolas said, "How would you like your friend Hermione to spend a few days with you here?"

"Yes please." Harry said.

A couple of hours later, Hedwig flew into the house with a reply from Hermione. Harry took it and read it out loud.

Dear Harry (and Professor & Mrs. Flamel),

Thank you for your kind invitation to stay at your home. It couldn't have come at a better time – my parents are about to go to one of their very boring dental conventions and they normally leave me with an aunt and I hate her as much as you hate your aunt.

I asked Mum and Dad if I could stay with you instead and they said they had no problem with it providing there are no problems with it at your end. They leave tomorrow if you want to arrange a time to collect me.

The letter went on about how much she looked forward to the trip and how much learning could be done.

"Send her a letter back Harry telling her that there is no problem whatsoever and we'll pick her up at seven tonight." Nicolas said.

Harry wrote the note and got Hedwig to deliver it.

The following day, Nicolas informed them that Dursley Tormenting Stage Three would take place that evening.

"According to our listening charms, a potential Grunnings client is taking the Dursleys to dinner tonight at the Ritz." Nicolas said. Hermione listened open mouthed, she knew the Ritz was VERY expensive.

"So, we're going to dress in our best and go to dinner there ourselves." Perenelle said, liking the idea of tormenting the Dursleys, "AND we're going to order the most expensive food there is."

Nicolas took Hermione aside after lunch. "We have a cause to celebrate anyway – the Ministry – both Muggle and Magical have approved Harry's adoption and there will be a surprise in store for the Dursleys tonight. Say no more, mum's the word." Hermione nodded.

Harry, Hermione, Nicolas and Perenelle stood outside the Ritz hotel that evening – all four were wearing their Muggle best.

"Now Harry, it's traditional for men to take their date's arm and walk them to the table." Nicolas said. Both pre-teens went red but Hermione slid her arm through Harry's as Nicolas took them to the appointment desk.

"Flamel, table for four?" Nicolas asked.

"Ah yes, Professor Flamel." The Stewart said after checking the book, "We have you reserved for Table 6 as requested." He lead the party over to the table. "I must say, it's a honour to have someone of your standing here Professor." The Stewart continued as they passed the Dursley table. That family listened in interest and looked in horror as they saw Harry walk past with a beautiful looking girl.

"Who are those people?" The client asked, noticing the way the Dursleys were looking at the Flamel party.

"No-one of importance," Vernon said, knowing that if he botches this deal up, he might as-well fire himself as the Grunnings shareholders would do it to him if this very important potential client took his business elsewhere – the deal was worth millions. He had managed to talk himself out of trouble after the Mason affair and he was

surprised that after the revelations that were made during that dinner, they didn't have Social Services on their doorstep.

Harry and his group sat at their table and were given the menus. Nicolas and Perenelle ordered a glass of white wine while Harry and Hermione ordered water. A very expensive starter followed. Dudley Dursley looked open-mouthed – all he got was a £5 starter. He didn't say anything – Vernon had warned him that should they see Harry and the others in a place like this, he wasn't to say a word.

The evening went on without a hitch. Dudley did look envious as Harry got expensive food (for the food fans, the Flamel party had Salad of Aberdeen Angus beef, carrots, horseradish & Shetland Black potatoes for starters, whole poached wild salmon and duck egg dressing with wheaten bread and country butter for the fish course, Dexter beef fillet, ox cheek, smoked potato puree and marrow bone for the main course and expensive chocolate ice cream for) while he had cheap stuff (his parents got food that cost more than Dudley's though).

After the main course was finished, Nicolas called for the waiter who came over.

"A bottle of your best champagne please, my good man." Nicolas asked. The waiter came over with the bottle and some glasses.

"A glass for these two fine people too," Nicolas said, indicating Harry and Hermione, "We are celebrating and there is no harm in giving these two a small glass." The waiter filled the glasses and following Nicolas' lead, the others picked them up.

"Today, I got confirmation that Harry's adoption has been approved today, therefore Harry is now in effect our son and heir." Nicolas said, toasting the occasion and the four drank. Then it was time for desert – very expensive ice-cream.

"So freak, how much did you pay this whore to go out with you then?" A voice could be heard. The four turned and saw Dudley standing over them.

"Unlike you," Harry said, "I don't need to buy my friends."

"You know what happens when people talk to you – I'm afraid I'm going to have to teach her a lesson." Dudley said.

"Lay one finger on her Dudley and you will regret it." Harry said. Nicolas left the table and went to the Stewart at the door.

"Touch me freak and Dad will kill you where you stand." Dudley said.

"Do you think violence is the only way to get what you want?" Hermione asked.

"It is when people disobey me and that freak has disobeyed me by having friends!" Dudley shouted. Vernon, Petunia and the client turned and saw him, Petunia going red.

"Tell me," Hermione continued, "Did your daddy buy your place in Smeltings or did you actually earn it?"

Dudley went purple, then grabbed Hermione's bowl of ice cream and shoved it into her face with so much force it broke her nose and she fell backwards, off her chair. Dudley went over to her and would have started to do other things but Harry pulled him away. Vernon came over and grabbed Harry.

"How dare you touch Dudley." He said, "You're going to suffer for this."

"STAY WHERE YOU ARE!" a voice could be heard. Everyone turned and saw the police. Vernon dropped Harry.

"Officer, my delinquent nephew went berserk and started to attack that fine girl and my son." He lied.

"We saw everything. You and your son are under arrest." The officer said. With much struggling, the officers managed to put handcuffs on the male Dursleys. Before they could be dragged away, the client went over to Vernon.

"So, what the Masons said was true. Grunnings is finished Dursley, we're going elsewhere."

As Vernon and Dudley were dragged away, Petunia walked away, shamefaced. An ambulance came and took Hermione away. Nicolas went to the steward.

"We apologize for this, we had no idea Harry's relations would get violent in a place like this." He said.

"No problem Professor," he said, "The managers will get the cost of the damages out of them. I hope your son's friend gets better soon."

"Thank you." Nicolas said.

Hermione was in surgery the following morning to sort out her broken nose. The same day, Dudley was charged with assault.

Harry went into Hermione's hospital room carrying a big bunch of flowers.

"What's this for?" she asked.

"An apology for what Dudley did to you. If I knew what he was going to do, I wouldn't have taken you there."

"You don't need to apologise Harry James Potter." Hermione said, "It was not your fault. That cousin of yours has a few problems and he needs to get help."

The final bout of Dursley Tormenting came with the arrival of the Financial Times which was delivered by a Muggle delivery boy the following week. Nicolas said that since the Potters and himself had quite a few holdings in the Muggle world, it made sense to keep track of them via the financial papers.

GRUNNINGS CLOSED DOWN

COMPANY DIRECTOR UNDER INVESTIGATION

FOR ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD, EMBEZZLEMENT AND CHILD ABUSE

It had interviewed the Masons and the rich client from the Ritz and got all sorts of dirt regarding the Dursleys. After the client spilt the beans to other clients and people about what sort of people the

Dursleys were like, Grunnings' share price fell to a very low figure and the shareholders went bankrupt as they couldn't sell their shares.

Then the Inland Revenue got called in and investigated discrepancies in the finances of Grunnings and found that Vernon was pocketing very large amounts of Grunnings money and blackmailing certain people to keep quiet about it. It was also discovered that Vernon wasn't paying any taxes. The article also stated that to prevent Grunnings workers from suffering because of it, they were being offered good jobs with other companies.

Nicolas smiled when he finished reading the story in the paper.

"And that's what it's all about." He said. He was satisfied, Vernon and the Dursleys had paid for the way they treated Harry. "We told you that the Dursleys would pay for what they had done to you. Nobody hurts family."

"Thank you." Harry said.

People spoke up about the way Dudley had treated them and how Vernon and Petunia encouraged it. He was sentenced to five years in a juvenile detention facility. Vernon was charged with a multitude of crimes and was sentenced to fifty years in prison (the Home Secretary imposed most of it because he cheated the tax man and depriving the government of money so they could have their expensive Rolex watches and multiple cars and homes was a big no-no). Petunia left the country, too ashamed to show her face around Privet Drive again.

Nicolas continued Harry's apprenticeship. Hermione watched as her best friend was being educated.

"Why don't you join us Hermione?" Nicolas asked.

"Yes please." She said, eager to learn, "But isn't there a Ministry rule saying Muggleborns can't become apprentices?"

"Yes there is," Nicolas said, "but the Ministry have NO way to know that you are being educated here. There is no law saying Muggleborns aren't allowed to read magical books outside of Hogwarts. If this was the case, there would be no point in giving out

homework." Hermione looked shocked at the idea of not being given homework.

"But, won't they know I'm performing magic? Before we left for the holidays, we got notes reminding us not to perform magic during the holidays." Hermione asked.

"Tuuuut." Nicolas said, "Did you know that only Muggleborns or those raised in Muggle households get warning letters if magic is performed outside of school? Your friend Ron could cast all the spells he wanted at his home and not get a warning letter."

"Not that he could cast many." Harry said to Hermione and she had to agree.

"That's wrong!" Hermione said.

"I'm afraid it's one of the Ministry's many anti-muggleborn laws. People like Lucius Malfoy pay huge sums for laws like these to be passed because they think Muggleborns should not be allowed in our world.

Over the next few weeks, she and Harry continued to learn, Hermione did very well.

"You're quite good Hermione." Nicolas said at the end of her stay, "Sadly, as the law states Muggleborns can't be taken on as apprentices, I can't invite you to be an apprentice too but I am prepared to be your sponsor."

"What does that mean?" Hermione asked.

"A Pureblood can sponsor a Muggleborn student through their time at Hogwarts. It means that they will be their liaison between Muggle parents and the wizarding world. For instance, if Hogwarts had to send a letter saying you had been injured, it would come to me and I would inform your parents, but you would still receive your Hogwarts letters as usual. A Muggleborn with a Pureblood sponsor would have more rights and it can carry a lot of weight."

"You would do that for me?" Hermione asked.

"Yes I would," Nicolas said, "I would have to speak to your parents first."

Nicolas took Hermione's parents aside the following day and explained a lot of things to them.

"That McGonagall woman never told us this." Mr. Granger said.

"There's a lot of things Hogwarts don't tell the Muggleborns thanks to the Pureblood brigade." Nicolas said, "I maybe a pureblood myself but I support Muggleborns – without them, we'd have died out years ago and there isn't a spell invented that Hermione can't do. The thing is, extreme purebloods marry cousins – everyone is related to someone one way or the other and after generations, the blood gets tainted and they lose their magical abilities. Some end up producing Squibs – people born to magical parents but have no magic while others just don't have as much power. Hogwarts lessons have been changed to make things too easy, just because of the Purebloods." Nicolas said.

"So, what do we have to do about this sponsorship thing?" Mrs. Granger asked.

"Just give your written consent to allow me to sort out magical issues involving Hermione. I would handle the Ministry or Hogwarts with issues, but I would inform you as soon as I got a letter from either place involving her. I would also be the agent should someone wish to negotiate a marriage contract, but I would give Hermione the choice to choose. Although, if things go the way I think they're going, contracts might not be necessary, but we might have to get something in writing eventually. I would also handle financing of the Hogwarts fees. Finally, if anything were to happen to you, then custody of Hermione would go straight to me, then I and only I can authorise her placement with someone written in your will."

"Are you sure about all this?" Mr. Granger asked.

"I have no children myself," Nicolas said, "Harry is our adoptive son and heir but he is still heir to the Potter fortune and that is worth a lot more than my estate, but I can still afford to pay for Hermione to be put through Hogwarts without leaving too much of a dent."

"We accept your kind offer, Professor Flamel." Mr. Granger said. The papers were signed, sealed and delivered within minutes.

Later that day, Harry went to Nicolas.

"I remember hearing about a person called Sirius Black during my parent's will reading. But I can't find anything out about him. Who is he?" Harry asked.

Please review, with thanks to those who do.

With acknowledgements to the Great British Menu program for the food courses, I found a listing of what was cooked (we watch the program) and mixed up the menus – my lovely beta alix33 said I should write down what was eaten for the food mad people.

Chapter Five

"Sirius Black," Nicolas said, "I wondered when you would ask about him. Tell me, what do you know of your parents' friends?"

"Nothing. I've asked a few people at school and they always seemed tight-lipped, as if anything about them is a closely guarded secret." Harry answered.

"As I said, I knew your father's family quite well," Nicolas said, "Sirius Black was one of the last two children of the House of Black, a known Dark family for centuries. He was quite different however. Besides his cousin Andromeda, he was sorted into a house other than Slytherin – in this case, Gryffindor. His mother was furious and sent him Howler after Howler, demanding he get resorted."

"Can that happen?" Harry asked.

"No. When you have been sorted, you're stuck in that house until you graduate unless the Headmaster says otherwise. During his first days at Hogwarts, he met your father and they became the best of friends." Nicolas said, "They also befriended two boys called Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew, but the less said about him, the better."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"We'll get to it," Nicolas said, "You've told me about Fred and George Weasley – they were just like them back in the day. The key to their success was an item called the Marauder's Map. They created it and it was a marvellous piece of magic. Activate it and it shows a near complete map of Hogwarts and it tells you where everyone is at any time."

"Why near complete?" asked Harry.

"There is a story about a legendary Chamber of Secrets created by Slytherin himself. Also, there is a room called the 'Come and Go Room' otherwise known as the Room of Requirement. The map won't be complete until those two rooms are on there."

"What about Sirius Black?" Harry asked.

"Ah yes, Sirius," Nicolas said, "As he went through Hogwarts, his family, especially his mother, disliked his exploits, especially since he was in Gryffindor. When he was sixteen, he ran away from home and your grandparents took him in. He was like a second son to them.

"We must now jump forward a couple of years. By the time you were born, our world was in its greatest crisis in its long history. Voldemort and his Death Eaters were going all over the country killing anyone who didn't match their agenda – including Muggleborns, Muggles and anyone Voldemort decided was a blood-traitor. Mrs. Weasley's brothers were killed because of Mr. Weasley's Muggle loving ways. Your parents defied him many times and survived to tell the tale. Our side got word that Voldemort was going to kill them and you once and for all. So, it was decided that you would go into hiding under the Fidelius Charm."

"What is the Fidelius?" asked Harry.

"It is a charm which hides information inside a Secret Keeper and only he or she can reveal the secret. In theory, with your family under the charm, Voldemort could walk right past your home and not be any the wiser to the three of you being there. It was common knowledge that Sirius was the Secret Keeper, everyone knowing how your father would trust him with his life. But everyone believes Sirius betrayed your family to Voldemort."

Harry had tears in his eyes. "How could he do that to his best friend?" he asked.

"One moment Harry. Sirius was NOT the Secret Keeper. Peter Pettigrew was. Between myself, your parents, Sirius and Peter, it was decided to change it to Peter, with him being the least obvious choice. He was the one who betrayed your parents, not Sirius Black"

"What happened to them?"

"This is what I know – after your parent's deaths, Sirius went to confront Peter and murdered him and thirteen Muggles with a single curse. Sirius was sent to Azkaban without trial and he still lingers there to this day. Everyone believes that he betrayed your parents and to our world, that is worse than killing the Muggles."

"Can't we set the record straight?" Harry asked.

"I tried, but the Ministry refused to believe me. It is common knowledge that Lucius Malfoy bribed his way out of prison by making false claims of being under the Imperius curse – that is a form of mind control. I guess that he is paying the Ministry to keep Sirius behind bars without trial."

"Ron told me when we first met that his dad believes that Lucius Malfoy was making it up about being bewitched." Harry answered, "Is the whole Ministry corrupt?"

"No, why?" Nicolas asked.

"Is there anyone high up in the Ministry that we can trust?" Harry asked.

"Well, Amelia Bones took over from Barty Crouch as Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement after he fell from favour in a big way."

"How?"

"His own son was caught in Death Eater activity."

"Really?" Harry said, surprised.

"That was a major turning point in his career. During the war with Voldemort, he fought fire with fire. He authorised the use of the Unforgivable Curses on Death Eaters and other suspects. Sirius wasn't the only one to be sent to Azkaban and the Dementors without trial. He was so effective, he was rumoured to become Minister of Magic himself after Bagnold retired. But, his son, along with the Lestrangle trio, who had previously got out of prison with false claims of being under Imperius were caught torturing Frank and Alice Longbottom, thinking they knew where Voldemort was."

"Are they Neville Longbottom's parents?" Harry asked.

"I'm afraid so," Nicolas said, "I knew the Longbottoms well and they and the Potters were allies. The Cruciatus curse, one of the three Unforgivables, the Imperius curse being the second and the killing curse being the third, was used on them with so much force, they

are now insane. They are in the magical hospital St. Mungo's. Poor Neville was raised by his grandmother ever since."

"I never realised." Harry said.

"You wouldn't have known. Dumbledore knew how isolated from our world you would be, having been sent to the Dursleys. Barty Crouch Jr, along with the Lestrage trio had a mock trial in which Crouch disowned his son and sent all four of them to Azkaban for life. This was one crime no-one could escape punishment for with claims of being under Imperious."

"So, we go to Amelia Bones and get her to look into Sirius' case?" Harry asked.

"With discession," Nicolas said, "if certain people found out she was looking into it, she and Sirius could meet with an 'accident'. But I will help sort things out. One thing though, Peter was more cunning than believed. He, Sirius and your father were unregistered Animagi – witches and wizards who could turn into animals. Peter was a rat, Sirius was a dog while your father was a stag. Peter could have faked his death to escape punishment. After the explosion, all they found of him was a finger. That was given to his mother along with an Order of Merlin Second Class."

"Wait a minute," Harry said, "If a human loses a finger, does their animal form reflect it?"

"Yes, the animal form will also show the loss of a finger or toe. Why do you ask?" Nicolas said.

"Ron has a rat which was given to him by his brother Percy. I saw magical rats in Diagon Alley when Hagrid brought me Hedwig. His rat Scabbers doesn't act like a magical rat and he has a missing toe! He also looks quite old. It may just be a non-magical rat, but..."

"You might be onto something here." Nicolas said, "Wait here a moment."

Nicolas left the room and returned five minutes later.

"We can't go to the Burrow right now," Nicolas said, "The Burrow is still quarantined but as soon as we can, we'll have a look at the rat."

The Burrow wasn't released from quarantine until the day before Hogwarts restarted for a new year. Hermione and her parents came to the Flamel house and the group went to King's Cross together.

At Platform 9 ½'s, they went to greet the Weasleys. Ron was pushing a trolley with his trunk on with Scabbers the rat in a cage on top.

"Ron," Nicolas said, "Can I have a look at that rat please?"

"Sure," Ron said, confused. He passed the cage over and Nicolas had a good look.

"Do you mind if I borrow him for a while please?" Nicolas asked, "There seems to be something very unusual about him. If there is nothing wrong, I'll have him returned to you."

After the children were put on the train and it was on the way to Hogwarts, Nicolas went to Mr & Mrs Weasley.

"Based on some memories, Scabbers might be an unregistered Animagus. I'm going to take him to Amelia Bones for unmasking," Nicolas said, "If the results are what I think they will be, I'll get something for Ron to make it up to him, after all, it'll be my fault he no longer has a pet. Another thing, Gilderoy Lockhart might turn his Defence lessons into farcical autobiographical lectures about himself. If he does, he's impeding the teachings of an apprentice and that can be a serious offence."

"We'll help you if you need it." Arthur promised.

Two days later, Gilderoy Lockhart's first Defence lesson was in session.

"Gilderoy Lockart, Order of Merlin, Second Class," he droned as he listed his (so-called according to Harry) achievements. Not many people listened to him although most of the girls looked at him with love struck eyes. "I aim to teach you everything I can to protect you from the Dark Arts. First, to make sure you've all read my books, you have a pop quiz."

He passed over parchment to the students. There were thirty questions, all about Lockhart. Discreetly, Harry duplicated the parchment and put the copy in his bag. Lockhart then announced the test was starting. After an hour, time was up and Lockhart collected the tests.

"It seems that Hermione Granger has got full marks – she seemed to realise my greatest ambition is to rid the world of evil and market my own line of hair care products. Thirty points to Gryffindor."

The lesson then consisted of Cornish Pixies which he let loose then scarpered after (what Harry believed was a made up spell) getting Harry, Ron and Hermione to clear up. Neville Longbottom ended up hanging from a chandelier while a pixie threw Lockhart's wand out of the window while others wrecked his portraits (Fred and George Weasley later claimed they saw Lockhart crying like a girl during their Defence lesson because the portraits were wrecked and he set the class a task to repair them using magic).

"What a farce." Harry said as they left the lesson, "All we did was learn more about that idiot."

"How can you insult teachers like that?" Hermione asked, stunned, "Any other teacher caught you talking like that, you'll get detention."

"Lessons like that hinder the progress of an apprentice." Harry said, "That is a serious offence. You should know that!"

"What are you going to do about it?" Ron asked.

"Gather more evidence then send it all to Nicolas." Harry said, "Wouldn't you rather be taught by someone who knew what he was talking about?"

"I have to admit," Hermione said, "We learn more from Professor Snape than Professor Lockhart."

That evening, Harry extracted a memory of the lesson to send to Nicolas. He also got Fred and George to do the same then convinced Angelina Johnson (who was in their class) to do the same – they were taught by Lockhart the day before.

"He's a fake!" she was saying to him, "My uncle is a werewolf and we tried the curse to reverse the process, which is mentioned in one of his books and did it work, no!" She promised to get a Pensieve memory of the incident sent to Harry as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Nicolas had taken Scabbers the rat to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

"So," Amelia Bones said, "You think this rat is an illegal animagus and on top of that, is really a wizard who is legally classed as dead?"

"Yes Madam Bones," Nicolas said, "There are too many similarities between this rat and Peter Pettigrew, so I decided to bring him to you to find out the truth."

"Very well, I'll perform the anti-animagus charm." Amelia said, after summoning a couple of Aurors. Nicolas took the rat out of the cage and held him by the tail as the counter-curse was performed. Slowly, the rat began to turn into a human.

Harry walked to the Owlery with a package. It contained several Pensieve memories plus copies of Lockhart coursework. He gave the package to Hedwig who flew away. He made his way back to Gryffindor Tower when McGonagall stopped him.

"Mr. Potter – I've been asked to take you to the headmaster." She said. He followed her to Dumbledore's office.

"Please sit down Mr. Potter." Dumbledore said. Harry sat down.

"Tell me, how is it being apprentice to my old friend?" he asked.

"It's quite good sir, I'm really learning a lot." Harry said.

"Alright – you've had your holiday away from the Dursleys. I must insist that you go back there for three weeks from today to recharge the blood wards. You don't want them to come to any harm, do you?"

"To be frank Professor," Harry said, "I don't care what happens to them. As Headmaster, you have no say over what I do during the holidays. Threaten to expel me if you will, but let it be known that if

you do, Nicolas has a spot for me at the Shamrock School of Magic all prepared. They were over the moon at the chance of poaching the Boy-Who-Lived from Hogwarts. Also, Nicolas has adopted me so if you try to send me to the Dursleys, you will be breaking the law." He got up. "If that is all, then I will take my leave."

"There is something else." Dumbledore said, "If you do not agree to return to the Dursleys, then you will lose privileges – your spot on the Quidditch team will be revoked and your mail privileges will be blocked."

"That in itself is illegal Dumbledore," Harry said, "You have no right blocking communication between an Apprentice and Master. Nicolas discovered that the Dursleys did not file for custody of me, so their so-called guardianship was illegal. Nicolas is now my legal guardian and as I said before, I do not care what happens to the Dursleys. Take me off the team by all means, just have a very good reason."

With that, Harry walked out of the office. Dumbledore knew Harry was right – he couldn't go to McGonagall and tell her that Harry was off the team just because he wouldn't go to the Dursleys – he knew McGonagall didn't like them anyway and had fought against his placement there for years. He had to try something.

"Request by Albus Percival Wolfric Brian Dumbledore to have Nicolas Flamel's adoption of Harry James Potter overruled – dismissed." Fudge said.

"Request by Albus Dumbledore to award custody of Harry James Potter to the Muggle Dursley family – dismissed."

"Request by Albus Dumbledore to have Master – Apprentice relationship between Nicolas Flamel and Harry James Potter revoked – dismissed. Get out of my sight Dumbledore." Fudge said. Dumbledore left Fudge's office defeated.

Harry was walking back to the Gryffindor Common Room when he heard screaming. He turned the corner and saw several students kicking at a younger Ravenclaw student.

"Get off her!" Harry shouted, going to pull one of the students away. With the bullies distracted, the girl got up as they turned their attention to Harry. She ran away.

"Why do you want to defend her for Potter?" the student (another Ravenclaw) asked, "It's only Looney Lovegood."

"I don't care who it is – you have no right to bully people unless they've done something to you and since she is only a first year and you a sixth year, she's done nothing to you." Harry said.

Moments later, the girl came back with Professor Flitwick.

"What's going on here? Miss. Lovegood came to me to say you were all ready to attack Mr. Potter." The Professor asked.

"Professor, I saw these people attacking this young lady and I will be prepared to submit pensieve memories of the incident to you and Professor McGonagall. They seem to be under the impression that they can attack her because people think of her as Looney." Harry said.

Flitwick looked at the bullies and noticed they were all wearing Ravenclaw badges.

"That is it. I had enough of my Ravenclaws bullying one of my students because of her metamorph abilities but bullying because of her eccentric father and beliefs? Twenty points each will be taken and you will serve a month of detentions. If it happens again, you will be suspended." Flitwick said, "Mr. Potter, thirty points to Gryffindor for helping a fellow student."

"Thank you Professor." Harry said. Flitwick walked away with the students.

"Thank you Harry Potter," the girl said, "I'm Luna Lovegood."

As usual, I don't own anything.

With thanks to alix32 for her excellent beta-ing work.

Chapter Six

Days went by without Harry hearing anything from Nicolas. Another strange thing was that Hedwig was no-where to be found. Harry hunted all over the school for her but he had no luck. He ended up getting Hermione to send a school owl to Nicolas to ask if she was still at the house.

At the end of the week came the first Potions class of the term. Snape collected the homework and looked over it, paying particular attention to Harry's work.

"Detention Potter, every day for the next three weeks." He eventually said.

"What for Professor?" Harry asked.

"Cheating on your homework and getting Miss. Granger to do it for you." Snape said.

"With all due respect sir," Harry said, "I had access to a very good library which was able to help."

"That is a lie Potter, the only Potions book you have access too while at the Muggles is the set book from last year." Snape answered, "Another two weeks detention for lying."

"You obviously don't know then Professor," Harry countered, "I became the apprentice of Nicolas Flamel over the holidays and he has quite an extensive library. Also, if I was lying, I would be breaking the law by having an apprentice badge on my robes."

Everyone turned and looked at the badge with admiration. The lesson went ahead and seemed to go on without incident. At the end, Harry bottled two vials of his potion and gave one to Snape. A smash could be heard, Harry turned and saw Draco Malfoy standing next to the vial, which was now on the floor.

"Another three weeks' worth of detention Potter." Snape said, smirking. Harry went to get another vial from his cauldron only to find it was empty.

"Potter! How could you get yourself detention with Professor Snape for the next eight weeks!" Oliver Wood shouted, "I wanted to get a few practices in before the other houses booked the pitch." They were in the Great Hall for the evening meal.

"Well I'm sorry Snape decided I cheated on my homework, lied about having access to a good library and allowed Draco Malfoy to destroy my work." Harry said.

"Well, I'm afraid you're off the team if you're unable to train." Wood said. At the staff table, Dumbledore and Snape smiled.

"WHAT?" Harry said.

"If you can't train, then there is no point in being on the team." Wood said.

"Fine – be like that then." Harry said, "Just remember that when you need a better seeker, don't come crawling back to me."

An owl flew to Hermione a couple of days later and dropped a note in front of her. She turned to Harry.

"Hedwig's not at your house – Nicolas and Perenelle haven't seen her since they received those Pensieve memories – they also want to know why you're not writing to them." Hermione said.

"I sent them a message by school owl two days ago."

Nicolas led Sirius Black onto the Hogwarts grounds and went into the Great Hall. Dumbledore stood up.

"Nicolas, my old friend. How are you?" Dumbledore asked.

"Stop with the old friend thing Dumbledore. I want a word with you, McGonagall, Snape and my apprentice in your office at once!" he said.

"Very well." Dumbledore said.

The group went into Dumbledore's office – the first thing Harry noticed was Hedwig in a cage. She hooted at him. Harry went over and let her out – she flew out of the window.

"What right have you got to kidnap my owl and keep her prisoner?" Harry asked.

"That of acting in your best interests." Dumbledore said, "I may be overruled about the Dursleys but I stand firm in blocking your mail."

Nicolas waved his wand. "Consider those illegal mail blocking charms removed." He said. "Abducting a wizard's familiar is a serious offence Albus, but we'll sort that out later. I want a word with you about Gilderoy Lockhart – I've seen memories of several Defence lessons from many year groups and all of them are a complete farce. That is impeding the education of an apprentice."

"Professor Snape is also impeding my education," Harry said and explained what happened during Potions and the consequences of it.

"That does it!" Nicolas barked, "I'm going to withdraw Harry from here and send him to Shamrock."

"I'm sure we can come to some settlement here," Dumbledore said, "I don't think Harry wants to leave Hogwarts."

"I don't particularly want to leave Hogwarts but I will go where Nicolas wants me to go – maybe I'll get a better education at Shamrock." Harry answered. He and Nicolas went to one side then came back.

"This is what will happen – all the detentions will be revoked. Professor McGonagall – you will tell Oliver Wood that Harry is back on the Quidditch team. You will allow Harry to floo to my home on Saturdays except on Quidditch match or training days for Potions lessons – it is obvious that he is not learning anything from Snape. He is not to make contact with Harry for ANY reason. Harry will be except from Potions while Snape is teaching. You will also hire someone who will teach Defence properly. Finally, there will be no mail blocking charms." Nicolas said, "Accept these conditions or I withdraw Harry from Hogwarts and send him to Shamrock. As his legal guardian, I can do this." Nicolas said.

"Very well." Dumbledore said, "But I can't fire Lockhart – the governors signed a two year contract with him. I will hire someone to work with him though to make sure he is teaching properly."

"Albus – you can't cave in to that brat's demands!" Snape said.

"Nicolas has given the demands Severus. As Harry's guardian and master, it is within his right." Dumbledore said, "I would like to propose a compromise though. I accept I am beaten involving the Dursleys, but during the holidays, Harry must be forbidden to leave your house and to send and receive mail – Death Eaters would relish the chance to find him."

"I will not agree to that." Nicolas said, "Harry is a child and needs to have a life to have fun, not be locked up with no contact with anyone. He had enough of that with the Dursleys. Also, if Harry Potter goes, Hermione Granger will leave with him."

"I'm afraid you can't do that Nicolas." Dumbledore said.

"I am Miss. Granger's magical world sponsor. Her parents are allowing me a free hand here and have given their blessing for Hermione to be transferred should I deem it necessary." Nicolas said.

"Who will we hire to assist Professor Lockhart?" Dumbledore asked.

"It so happens, I have just the person. Sirius Black, former Auror, falsely accused of being a Death Eater, released from Azkaban on September 2nd by Amelia Bones on the presentation of new evidence – Peter Pettigrew. He was alive and well, living as an unregistered animagus in the Weasley household."

Everyone was stunned at the news. "Also, since he is Harry's godfather, he can help keep an eye on him."

"How did you get him out of prison and why was I not informed about it?" Dumbledore asked.

"I had a tip-off that Peter Pettigrew was alive and well and living in this castle as an unregistered Animagus for five years, eleven years as the pet of the Weasley family. I know Sirius did not betray the

Potters and I know he would not have murdered those Muggles. So, I took up the case with people I could trust, because, I know if certain people knew his case was being investigated, Sirius might meet up with an accident." Nicolas answered. He turned to Harry. "The mail blocking charms have been removed and I have put on a charm which cannot be removed which tells me if someone tries to put it back on. Sirius will make sure Lockhart teaches something worthwhile – if he does not, then I will petition the governors for his removal."

Sirius and Nicolas took Harry into an empty classroom for a quick talk before Nicolas left.

"So you're my godfather." Harry asked.

"Yes, I am. What do you know of me?" Sirius asked.

"Only what Nicolas has told me. He's the only one to tell me anything of my family." Harry answered.

"I've done some checking into that," Nicolas said, "It appears that the previous Minister passed a law forbidding anyone from revealing anything about the Potter family. Technically, I broke the law when I told you about them but I've had a word with Fudge and Amelia Bones and they repealed the law. Fudge found out that Bagnold was planning to dissolve House Potter because you spent too long in the Muggle world with confiscation of all assets and properties. House Potter, as I said, carries a lot of weight with many anti-Muggleborn laws being dismissed thanks to it. Luckily, Fudge is on your side, so things will be different."

"What do you know of the Lovegood family?" Harry asked.

"I knew Xenophilius Lovegood during my days at Hogwarts," Sirius said, "I heard he married Ollivander's daughter. I had a bit of a soft spot for her. Why do you ask?"

"I saved a Luna Lovegood from bullies the other day and the way she acts, she has no-one. It seems she and her father are subject to ridicule. Can I place her under the protection of House Potter?"

"Not until you're 15 at the earliest." Nicolas answered, "I can either put her under protection or Sirius can. If you want, I can have a word

with Xenophilius – Luna is obviously his daughter and I will get back to you."

The next day, Harry came into the Great Hall to see Luna standing next to the doors.

"How come you're not having breakfast Luna?" he asked.

"My house have kicked me out. They all united against me. I've not attended lessons for a week because if I'm not a member of any house, I can't attend Hogwarts lessons." She said.

"We'll sort this out, in the meantime, come and have breakfast with myself and Hermione." Harry said, leading her to the Gryffindor table and they sat next to Hermione.

"What's Loony doing here?" Ron said, opening his big mouth without thinking (I do not think he CAN open his mouth any other way).

"Luna is here at my invitation Ron," Harry said, "You're not going to keep friends if you keep alienating friends of friends."

After breakfast, Harry and Luna went to the staff table to see McGonagall and Flitwick.

"What do you know about Ravenclaw House kicking Luna here out of the house?" Harry asked

"I don't know anything about this Mr. Potter." Flitwick said, "I will get it sorted out at once."

"I think it would be in her best interests for a resorting." Harry said.

"I can't authorise that without the Headmaster's permission, Mr. Potter." McGonagall answered.

Harry turned to Dumbledore, "I formally request that Luna here be resorted for her own sake. As you might have heard, Ravenclaw have kicked her out of the house and that is after being bullied since being sorted into that house. Any punishments Professor Flitwick may have given them seem to have fallen on deaf ears."

"Very well," Dumbledore said, "If she comes to my office after breakfast, I'll authorise a resorting." He was determined to stay in Harry's good graces, not wanting the boy to defect to Shamrock. He knew that if Harry defected, who knows who else would join him.

Half-an-hour later, Dumbledore was in his office with McGonagall and Flitwick. The door knocked and Luna came in with Harry.

"Why are you here Mr. Potter?" McGonagall asked.

"On the advice of my godfather, I decided to come along to make sure fair play was observed." Harry said. Sirius warned him that Dumbledore might try to modify memories to keep Luna in Ravenclaw. Dumbledore took the Sorting Hat and put it on Luna's head.

"GRYFFINDOR!" it shouted. Luna went over and gave Harry a hug.

"Thank you Harry," she said.

"Thank you for this, Professors. I will make sure that Gryffindors do not pick on her." Harry said before leaving.

Later that day, Sirius was talking to Nicolas via two-way mirrors.

"I've attempted to get Lockhart to teach worthwhile stuff, but he's now roping Harry in for pointless recreations of so called events in his books and the spells he tries out don't exist!" he said.

"That settles it. I'm calling in the Governors," Nicolas said, "I've been to the Lovegood residence. Things are bad there. Molly Weasley told me that Luna spent a lot of time at the Burrow because since Selina died, Xenophilius has been drinking heavily. Luna has been badly neglected because of this. According to Molly, Luna comes to her for all her meals otherwise she wouldn't be fed. Did you know that Selina died in front of her and she received no counselling?"

"What are we going to do about it?" Sirius asked.

"I'm going to have a word with the Grangers, see if they would be willing to take her in for holidays and be muggle guardians while either one of us takes up magical guardianship." Nicolas said.

"Good idea."

"You're so lucky, not having to be taught by Snape anymore." Ron said, after another Potions lesson in which Neville Longbottom had exploded another cauldron.

"Nicolas told Dumbledore that it was a condition of me staying here instead of going to Shamrock." Harry answered.

"My uncle went there," Seamus Finnigan said.

"What's it like there?" Harry asked.

"Quite good, according to him. He's tried to convince my mother to let me go there but she wanted me to come here. If you went there Harry," Seamus said, "Mother would probably send me there – she thinks any school with you in should be safe."

"Mate," Ron said, "Any chance of putting in a good word to get me out of lessons with Snape?"

Hermione looked astonished. "Ronald! You can't expect Harry to abuse his apprentice relationship for personal gain!" she said.

"Sorry," Harry said. He turned to Hermione, "Remember, you are Nicolas' unofficial apprentice so you learn just as much from him." Hermione remembered that Harry and Nicolas told her that she was able to attend the lessons too.

The next day, McGonagall told them that they had to choose electives for the next year.

"I'd quit Defence if I could." Ron said.

"But that's very important!" Hermione said, astonished.

"Not the way Lockhart teaches it – I've only learnt never to set pixies loose!"

"I'm going for Runes and Arthrimancy." Harry said, "What about you Hermione?"

"The same." Hermione said.

"Care of Magical Creatures and Divination here," Ron said, "Easy grades. Dad wanted us to take Muggle Studies. Bill and Charlie were brave enough not to take it up while Percy signed up for it just to add to his OWL totals – he got twelve Outstandings!"

Hermione tutted under her breath at the thought of Ron going through school the easy way without trying to learn much.

That same day, Sirius received a floo call from an Auror in his office.

"Nymphadora – what can I do for you?" Sirius asked.

"DON'T CALL ME NYMPHADORA!" Tonks said, "I've just received a tip-off that Delores Umbridge has applied for an arrest warrant for the entire Weasley family because Pettigrew lived with them for ten years, although they had no idea he was an animagus."

"I'll have to ask Dumbledore to put them under his protection or override it. Surly Amelia Bones won't sign off on it, or even Fudge?" Sirius asked.

"There's rumours going about that Umbridge has Lucius Malfoy put Fudge under the Imperius curse to pass laws that he doesn't want to pass." Tonks said.

"Follow Umbridge and try and catch them in the act." Sirius said.

"If Shackbolt found out I took matters into my own hands, he'll fail me faster than that!" she said, referring to the fact she was training to be an Auror.

"Tell him if you have to, but if it comes to it, say you were acting under orders from your Head of House." Sirius said.

"Very well." Tonks said before withdrawing her head from the fireplace. Sirius pondered on things quickly, hoping she would be in time. In the meantime, he had better talk to Dumbledore to arrange protection – he knew the Weasleys were close to Dumbledore and he would help them.

As usual, I don't own anything.

To those keen on pairings, I've setup a poll to help establish what it should be.

Chapter Seven

Nymphadora Tonks, first year Auror trainee, crept along the corridor. Moments earlier, she saw Dolores Umbridge and Lucius Malfoy walking towards the Minister's office. She couldn't take action yet because going to see the Minister was not a criminal offence.

She stood outside the door for a few moments, then she heard Lucius Malfoy say: "Imperio." Then Umbridge started to give orders. She burst open the door and stunned both Umbridge and Malfoy. She then called for help. Amelia Bones and Kingsley Shacklebolt hurried over.

"Madam Bones, I caught Lucius Malfoy casting the Imperius Curse on the Minister then Dolores Umbridge here giving him orders to have the Weasley family arrested. I stunned the two of them but I don't know how to release someone from the Imperius Curse yet." Tonks said. Madam Bones released the Minister.

"What's going on here?" he asked, seeing his financial sponsor on the floor along with his Undersecretary.

"Trainee Auror Tonks here uncovered a plot by Dolores Umbridge and Lucius Malfoy," Madam Bones said, "to put you under the Imperius curse to force you to pass illegal and unethical acts. She witnessed Malfoy here using the Imperius curse on you."

The two were taken to the cells while Tonks showed Fudge a Pensieve memory.

"Excellent work Auror Tonks," Fudge said, "I think an Order of Merlin Second Class is in order."

"Thank you sir." Tonks said.

Oliver Wood walked over to Harry in the Great Hall that evening.

"Potter, sorry for what I said the other day," he said, "I don't want to lose you from the team but the trouble you get yourself into will stop you from practicing and even prevent you from playing on match day. We need you back on the team."

"So Wood," Harry said, "When you heard the unjust reasons Snape gave me detention and deducted all those points, you were very quick to kick me off the team. Now, because Dumbledore is keen to keep me here, he and/or McGonagall has ordered you to reinstate me. So, I refuse. Find yourself a new seeker."

As Oliver Wood walked away, Ron turned to Harry.

"How could you turn him down?" Ron asked.

"I'm just going to make him sweat a little." Harry said, "I want people to recognise my talent for what it is, not because of this whole Boy-Who-Lived crap. To me, I'm the Boy-Who-Doesn't-Give-A-Damn about the whole thing. Yes, I do care about the people who lost friends and family to Voldemort, but they credit me with destroying him when it was thanks to my mother and she gets no credit. If he finds no Seeker before the game, then I'll participate, but as I said, I want to make him sweat first. Make him realise he can't drop me from the team then reinstate me later based on one person's opinion."

Nicolas and Perenelle walked to the Granger's home and pressed the doorbell. Mrs. Granger answered the door and invited the couple in.

"What can we do for you?" she asked, "Is there something wrong with Hermione?"

"No, Hermione's fine," Nicolas said, "We just need to ask you something."

"Alright." Mrs. Granger said.

"Events at Hogwarts has led to an investigation behind the parenting of one of Harry and Hermione's new friends. Young Luna has been neglected by her father since her mother's death, he has taken to very heavy drinking and with the amount that he has consumed, it is

killing him. We've obtained an order to remove her from her father, but we need someone to take her in during the holidays."

"I'll have to speak to my husband about it, but I don't see why we can't take her in."

With that, Mr. Granger came in. His wife took him aside and told him what Nicolas told her. They returned a moment later.

"We'll take the young girl in. We always wanted another child but were unable to." Mr. Granger said.

"Splendid. We'll contact Hogwarts to arrange to take Luna out for a weekend so the three of you can meet. We'll write to Hermione to let her know and we'll start filing the papers today." Nicolas said.

Harry, Ron and Hermione were on the way back to the Gryffindor Common Room when someone bumped into them.

"Daphne Greengrass?" Hermione asked. The girl nodded, "What's wrong?"

"I need a member of staff – I think Lockhart is attacking Tracey." Daphne said.

"Ron – go and find someone – Defence classroom?" Harry asked, Daphne nodded.

Ron turned and ran while Harry led the way to the Defence classroom. They could hear shouting from inside.

"Get off me you creep!" they could hear. Daphne confirmed that was Tracey Davis – her best friend. Then they could hear Lockhart's voice.

"Stand back." Harry said. He pointed his wand at the door. "REDUCTO!" he shouted. The door blew off its hinges and the sight they could see inside the classroom was sickening. "Accio Lockhart!" Harry said. The teacher flew toward the trio at the door. "Petrificus Totalus!" Lockhart was put under a body bind as McGonagall arrived with Ron. Daphne ran over to her sobbing friend.

"What's the meaning of this?" McGonagall asked. Hermione explained what they had seen and the steps taken by Harry to prevent it.

"Mr. Weasley – please go to the Headmaster's Office and get him to summon a couple of Aurors." McGonagall said. She then conjured a blanket to cover Lockhart's private regions. "Ms. Greengrass and Granger, please take Miss. Davies to the hospital wing. Mr. Potter, please wait here with me."

An hour later, everyone was convened in Dumbledore's office. Nicolas was also there, to represent Harry's interests in case Dumbledore tried anything for assaulting a teacher. Lockhart had been taken away by the Aurors.

It had been established that Tracey Davis had gone to Lockhart to get an extra credit assignment. But Lockhart locked the door, preventing Daphne from going in with her best friend.

"It is very clear that Miss. Davies was being raped," McGonagall said, "and if Miss. Greengrass hadn't found Mr. Potter and his friends in time, who knows what would have happened."

"I agree with you there Minerva," Dumbledore said, "Fifty points to Miss. Greengrass for raising the alarm, fifty points to Mr. Potter for preventing further atrocities. Thirty points each to Mr. Weasley and Miss. Granger for their part in helping raise the alarm and subduing Lockhart. Mr. Potter – while normally, you would face punishment for assaulting a teacher, I am ruling that you did what you did to help a fellow student in need, not knowing what would happen if you had to wait for a member of staff."

Professor Flitwick came in with a piece of parchment. "I found this in that man's office. It's a list of female students that he's put in detention since the first day of term. There are about ten in all who have already served detention with him plus another twenty who are due to serve it with him in the next week."

"This is serious Albus," McGonagall said, "We need to find the students who have already served detention with him and find out if he had done anything with them. Then we need to do some damage control – if it comes out that students were being raped by a teacher, the backlash against you will be enormous."

"Filius, Minerva, please see these students and talk to them discreetly." Dumbledore said. The two teachers left. "Mr. Potter, Mr. Weasley, Miss. Granger, Miss. Greengrass, you may leave now." The four students left leaving Dumbledore and Nicolas in the office alone.

"I trust now that Defence lessons will no longer be propaganda lessons about Lockhart now. When news of this gets out, your reputation and that of Defence Against the Dark Arts will suffer. Being a former Auror, Sirius Black will restore the reputation of the subject and teach material worth teaching. I want to know what you were thinking by hiring Lockhart in the first place?"

"I was practically railroaded into it Nicolas," Dumbledore said, "The Governors, especially Lucius Malfoy felt he was the best person for the job."

"Well, considering what's happening to Lucius Malfoy now, it's not surprising. It seems to me that he approves all these appointments that impede learning. It's as if he doesn't want students to know about dark magic and how to defend against them or know anything about Potions. It is known that high grade NEWT grades for Potions and Defence are needed to become an Auror. One has to wonder what agenda he has involving Voldemort – we both know he'll be back someday."

"Before you go old friend," Dumbledore said, "Why did you offer Harry an apprenticeship even though you have never offered one to anyone in all the years we've known each other?"

"Because Harry shows a lot of promise. I've followed his Muggle education for years and after 1985, it shows that he shows a lot of potential but has always had to hold back to avoid being better than that pig cousin of his." Nicolas said.

"I only meant to keep him safe from the Death Eaters. You must know that after Voldemort was vanquished, they made open threats to kill him in retaliation." Dumbledore said.

"There was other family who could have housed him. The Evans family have been squibs since just before I created my stone. The last magical Evans before Lily was Perenelle. Because all Evans

between them were Squibs, the line has been forgotten but not by us. If we were given the opportunity to, we would have raised him in safety. Your wards may have protected him from the Death Eaters but they did not protect him from the Dursleys. Keeping him a prisoner at Privet Drive is not the way to go."

"I had no idea," Dumbledore began.

"You had no idea about a lot of things Albus," Nicolas said, "You started to lose your judgement when you allowed Snape to continue teaching here despite the large number of complaints about him. I would rather Harry continue here, because with you here, the school is safe, but it will take that one little thing and Harry will be gone to Shamrock faster than that. One more thing – I want you to pass a rule which states that both pupils and staff members are forbidden to send any information about Harry to the Daily Prophet. That is an invasion of his privacy and Rita Skeeter's claims that it is in the public interest to see his mail and know his every move are not valid."

"Very well." Dumbledore said. He knew he was beaten. "I will make the rule known to the faculty and students during the evening meal."

McGonagall and Flitwick reported back to Dumbledore later that day. Discreet medical examinations revealed that the female students had been raped and obliterated afterwards. Lockhart's magical signature was all over them. Harry and the others were all awarded Award for Special Services to the School.

Sirius Black made his mark known in the Defence classroom a couple of days later. He held up a bag containing Lockhart's collected works.

"There is one word we need to know to deal with this crap," he said, putting it on his desk and aiming his wand at it, "Incendio." Seconds later, the bag caught fire and burnt to ashes.

"I have taken the liberty of purchasing new set books for these lessons. Don't worry, your families will not face the cost of these and I will personally pay back the rest of the money the Lockhart books cost." He took books out of a bag and distributed them among the class – A Practical Guide to Defence Against the Dark Arts. Draco put his hand up.

"Yes Mr. Malfoy?" Sirius asked.

"Cousin Sirius," Draco said, choosing his words well, "Mother has always spoken well of you, despite what Grandmother Black said about you, I should warn you that Potter over there is a danger to this class, he got terrible marks and he bribed his way into attending a second year."

"Twenty points from Slytherin for that Mr. Malfoy, and a detention," Sirius said, "I know the reasons behind my godson's low marks, which I will not get into here and I know that he retook the exams and got high grades, which I might add were a lot better than yours. Now, I do NOT buy any of that 'Purebloods are the best' and 'Muggleborns and Half-Bloods should not practice magic' rubbish. I believe everyone is equally entitled to learn magic. I will not tolerate any anti-Muggleborn slurs in my classroom and any I hear will be punished."

After that, he started the lesson. It was child's play to Harry and Hermione, having learnt it from Nicolas during the summer. They noticed they did the spells better than Malfoy. Despite them making efforts to teach Ron, he kept messing up. Sirius awarded Harry and Hermione thirty points each for brilliant spell casting and a bonus ten for trying to help Ron.

That weekend, Harry decided to bring something up with Nicolas during the Potions lesson.

"Can people just print facts that are assumed to be truth and not consult anyone about it?" he asked.

"Why do you ask?" Nicolas asked.

"When I first met Hermione, she told me she had read about me in Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century and The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts. I've had a look at these and it tells the events of what happened when my parents died in great detail, the writer had to be there. Ron also told me that his sister Ginny grew up reading Harry Potter Adventure books and some idiots believe I grew up doing the things in them. Can people do this?" Harry asked.

"Only by permission from a guardian, but I couldn't see people approaching the Dursleys for permission to do this, I will find out." Nicolas said.

The repercussions from this could be seen in the Daily Prophet a few days later.

HARRY POTTER ADVENTURE BOOKS BANNED!

For the last ten years, children across Britain have enjoyed the Harry Potter Adventure books, which saw the Boy-Who-Lived go on many adventures before beginning at Hogwarts. These were actually advertised as being based on real events.

Following an investigation instigated by Mr. Potter's legal guardians, it has been discovered that none of the events in the books happened – Mr. Potter spent ten years being raised by Muggles with no knowledge of magic before starting at Hogwarts. It was discovered that Albus Dumbledore authorised these books along with providing specific details on Mr. Potter's appearance and the famous scar so artist's renditions could be made.

In a compromise to prevent a lawsuit, Merlin Publishers have agreed to recall all unsold Harry Potter Adventure books, swear an oath never to publish any more books regarding Mr. Potter without the consent of both himself and his guardians. They have also agreed to make a token donation of 250 galleons (a pitifully low amount in whatever exchange rate conversion to muggle money you would care to use, given the humongous profits they have been making from those books over the years, in my opinion) to St. Mungos.

As this is written, Mr. Potter's guardian Nicolas Flamel is seeking to find out how details of his apprentice's defeat of You-Know-Who were made public and why it was published in Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century and The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts.

"I find it concerning that everyone in the British Wizarding World knows Mr. Potter's story when he wasn't even told of it or his family until he turned eleven and even then, information on his family being subject to secrecy laws, which our esteemed Minister Fudge have repealed. Albus Dumbledore said he supposedly hid Mr. Potter with Muggle relatives for his own protection but why say he had anything

to do with it at all? By announcing he had vanquished You-Know-Who and giving details on the whole thing and even announcing the news about the scar, he put my apprentice's life at risk." Mr. Flamel said.

The Daily Prophet are calling for the Ministry to find out why Dumbledore allowed these books to go ahead and to how he knows so much about what happened. Mr. Flamel is anticipating action against companies who have made unauthorised Harry Potter dolls, unauthorised reproductions of his Quidditch strip, unauthorised product endorsements, including the Nimbus 2000 broom and many other unauthorised products.

The Daily Prophet also carried an article on Umbridge and Lucius Malfoy being sentenced to life in Azkaban for using the Imperius curse on Minister Fudge. It turned out that the latest laws they were going to brainwash Fudge into passing would be forbidding Muggleborns to have magical possessions, forbid them from studying magic over holidays and to revoke Harry's apprenticeship.

"Who sold memories of me playing Quidditch?" Harry asked Sirius after the next DADA lesson (he had seen the article in The Prophet, "Who sold photos of me on my broom?"

"Calm down Harry," Sirius said, "Nicolas is looking into these things now. He'll have them off the market before you know it."

"I hope so, because I'm not going to play another game until the person responsible for it is dealt with." Harry said.

A few days later, another issue of the Daily Prophet had reported that all unauthorised Harry Potter merchandise was now illegal and all stores had three days to get the items off the shelves. But they were no nearer to finding out who leaked the photographs and memories. Fred and George Weasley had to warn off first year Colin Creevey who followed Harry around with his camera who eventually got the hint that he was being rude.

Time went on and eventually, it was time for the first Quidditch match of the year. Gryffindor vs Slytherin despite the fact it seemed the Gryffindor team had no Seeker. As Oliver Wood went to Madam Hooch to announce that they were forfeiting the match due to them

not having a Seeker, Harry went to the team in his Quidditch kit and with his broom.

"I thought you weren't playing anymore Potter?" Wood asked.

"At first I wasn't going to," Harry said, "I was really hurt by what you said – how many detentions have the Weasley twins had and you've never kicked them off – in the end I decided I would play for both myself AND my house."

It was then he first saw Draco Malfoy in Seeker armour too and the Slytherin team were holding Nimbus 2001 brooms.

"What's going on here?" Harry whispered to Fred.

"Before he got arrested, Lucius Malfoy brought Draco's spot on the team with those brooms." Fred answered.

The game was in full swing. Nicolas and Perenelle had come to watch and they stood with the Gryffindors (along with Daphne and Tracey who were now practically outcasts) Slytherin was using every dirty trick in the book and Madam Hooch was letting them get away with it. Eventually, the game was 230 – 130 to Slytherin when Harry saw the Snitch. He sped towards it but as he grabbed it, he felt his broom burning. As Madam Hooch declared Gryffindor to be the winners, the two Bludgers sped towards Harry and the first one smashed into his face, then the second one did the same. He fell off his broom as it finished burning away. As Harry fell, he felt himself getting hit again and everything went blank.

Please review, with thanks to those who do.

Challenge time – who do you think is leaking the photographs and memories to the public?

Chapter Eight

There was a full student hearing into the Quidditch incident later that day. Nicolas provided a Pensieve while students donated memories. Each was carefully examined. Eventually, it was established that Draco Malfoy used the Incendio curse on the broom while he got the Slytherin Beaters to send the Bludgers towards Harry and then he took one of the bats and hit Harry with it.

The Head Boy and Girl were making their report to Dumbledore and McGonagall.

"All the memories clearly establish that Draco Malfoy started the incident with the intent to cause harm. Why else would he cast Incendio at Harry Potter's broom? They also clearly establish that the Beaters commenced their assault with the Bludgers AFTER the game finished and then Malfoy used the Beaters' bat on Harry as he fell."

"Thank you Mr. Jenkins," Dumbledore said, "We will make sure the correct punishment is distributed."

The Head Boy and Girl turned and left.

Dumbledore turned to McGonagall. The two Beaters will be suspended from the next game. Mr. Malfoy will receive no punishment. "Mr. Potter needs to learn to forgive people for their infractions."

"I don't believe you Albus," McGonagall said, "What would you have done if Mr. Potter had done what Mr. Malfoy had done?" Dumbledore didn't say anything. "It would not surprise me if Nicolas Flamel withdrew Harry after this incident."

"I had nothing to do with what the boys did during the game." Dumbledore said.

"Maybe not, but the lack of punishment would make him do that. Why are you so keen to help Slytherin avoid punishments? Since you hired Severus Snape, punishments against Slytherin have gone down 99%." Again, Dumbledore didn't say anything. "You should be careful Albus, when Nicolas Flamel finds out about your refusal to punish these students, YOU may find yourself facing charges for

serious neglecting your duties. The actions of you and Severus are making a mockery of the House point system – I hear people say that you might as-well award the House Cup to Slytherin during the Welcome Feast. "

Dumbledore ignored her. Fed up of talking to herself, McGonagall left the room.

McGonagall entered the Hospital Wing and saw Harry, still unconscious with Nicolas, Perenelle, Hermione, Daphne, Luna and Tracey Davis standing nearby.

"I don't believe that man!" McGonagall said, very angry.

"What's wrong?" Nicolas asked.

"He refuses to punish Draco Malfoy for what he did and all those Slytherin Beaters got was a one match suspension. He says Harry needs to learn to forgive people for their infractions." McGonagall said.

Ron then came into the Hospital Wing. "Guess what I heard? Snape just gave Malfoy and those Beaters a three hundred point bonus for what they did! I heard him say 'a hundred points a piece for putting Potter in his place'." He answered.

"That does it," Nicolas said, "That is the last straw. Had Albus given these students the punishment they deserve for what they did, I would have allowed Harry to remain here. But now I find he's not punishing them, and now allowing his pet Death Eater to give house points for their actions, I'm withdrawing Harry from Hogwarts as of this moment." He turned to Hermione and Luna, "I'm sorry girls, but I'm also exercising my rights as Magical Guardian to withdraw the two of you from Hogwarts too. I'll have your placements at Shamrock confirmed within the hour."

"It's alright sir," Hermione said, "I wouldn't want to stay here without Harry - it won't be safe without him here."

Daphne and Tracey got rolls of parchment out and handed them to McGonagall, "Our parents signed these in anticipation of such actions. We're withdrawing from Hogwarts too," Daphne said, "Did you know that Malfoy keeps asking Tracey if she wants a repeat of

what Lockhart did to her and he keeps trying to get his way with me as well? I tried to complain to teachers but was ignored."

"I hope you're happy with yourself now Albus." McGonagall said in the Great Hall that evening.

"Why is that?" Dumbledore asked.

"Because, Nicolas Flamel has now withdrawn Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood from this school and Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davies have also given me letters, signed by their parents of their intention to transfer to Shamrock." McGonagall said.

"About time that Mudblood left Hogwarts - if I had my way, all of them would go." Draco said.

"Fifty points from Slytherin for that slur Mr. Malfoy and two weeks of detention." McGonagall said.

"That punishment is not necessary Minvera," Dumbledore said, "Mr. Malfoy is entitled to his opinion. The punishments are recanted."

"It seems Pureblood opinion is the only one that matters. Yes, he is entitled to his opinions but the use of that disgusting word is not acceptable," McGonagall countered, "The punishments stand." The students saw fifty points being deducted from the Slytherin hour-glass again, "Also, for their actions after the Quidditch game, Mr. Malfoy, Mr. Hoyle and Mr. Anderson have lost their houses three hundred points and they will serve two months of detention and I am invoking Deputy Headmistress powers to enforce these punishments and they cannot be revoked."

People watched as the Slytherin hour-glass almost emptied. But a lot of students knew that Snape would find some way to restore the points.

"Also, I am invoking my powers to state that Severus cannot deduct or give out House Points for the rest of the year." McGonagall finished. Students were mentally cheering – the House Cup fight this year would actually be a fair one without Snape showing bias towards his house.

The following day, a student went to McGonagall holding a book.

"Professor - do you know anything about this?" he asked. McGonagall looked at it - it was titled THE HARRY POTTER COMPENDIUM, 1991 - 1992. She looked through it. The magazine contained intimate details of every lesson Harry had over the previous year, every letter he wrote and received, photographs of his Quidditch games. There was even a feature entitled Ways Not to Play Quidditch. It detailed the jinxed broom, the missed match (which Dumbledore would not allow to be rescheduled) from the end of the previous year along with expert testimony on the games.

"I saw Draco Malfoy with this - I took it from him last night and I know this sort of thing isn't allowed Professor, so I thought you'd better be informed." The boy said.

"Thank you for bringing it to my attention, ten points to Slytherin Mr. Zabini." McGonagall said. She looked and saw Rita Skeeter's name on it. It also stated: With thanks to the Hogwarts students and teachers who helped compile all the information seen in this publication.

McGonagall had the entire school in the Great Hall that evening.

"As you are no doubt aware, unauthorised publications about Harry Potter are now illegal and Rita Skeeter is now facing a massive lawsuit over this. It has been brought to my attention that an illegal magazine about Harry Potter's first year at Hogwarts has been published and Rita Skeeter has established that Hogwarts staff and students helped her compile the information in it. I want to know who helped her. It will do well to admit it now as Nicolas Flamel is bringing a petition to the Ministry to have Ms. Skeeter questioned under the truth serum and she will name names, but if you own up now, I will try to ensure your families do not suffer for it."

At this very moment, Rita was in a courtroom. Nicolas and Perenelle were standing at one side.

"So," a voice could be heard, "you decided to break a restraining order and publish a new book, apparently at your expense about Harry Potter."

"I maintain," Rita said, "That as the Boy-Who-Lived, it is in the public interest to know everything he does. If it means intercepting his letters, or getting people to report on his movements, so be it."

"Your Honours," Nicolas said, "My apprentice, who I have found out is our many times great-grandson is a minor and therefore, his right to privacy must be respected. By what right does Rita think she has reporting every word spoken by Harry? It has gotten to the point where he wouldn't even write letters home to myself and my wife for fear she would find some way to intercept them. She has violated the restraining order preventing unauthorised works about my grandson to the point where she brought a printing press herself in order to do it. This book claims it was compiled with the help of Hogwarts staff and students - I want you to authorise the use of Veritaserum to find out the names of the people who helped her."

The judges bent down to confer among themselves. Moments later, they had reached a decision.

"We will authorise the use of Veritaserum on Rita Skeeter." The first judge said. A balliff managed to get her to take some of the truth serum after much struggling.

"Now Ms. Skeeter, please name the students and teachers who helped you compile your book." The judge asked.

"Lucius Malfoy gave his consent for the book to go forward, Draco Malfoy provided Pensieve memories of the Quidditch games along with all lessons Slytherin had with Gryffindor, Severus Snape gave details of all detentions, Dean Thomas of Gryffindor provided details of what Harry did in the Gryffindor Common Room, Percy Weasley also provided details." Rita went on for another few minutes, naming Professor Sinistra as another person who gave details and finally Rita confessed that using her animagus form, she copied Harry's medical file in the Hospital Wing.

"Your Honours, I would like to extend this lawsuit to include Lucius Malfoy, Aurora Sinistra and Severus Snape - none of them had the right to do what they did, especially Mr. Malfoy, who had no right to authorise this book. As for the students involved, I will contact Minevra McGonagall to ensure punishments are issued. The Weasley family are close to my grandson, so I will ask Arthur and Molly Weasley to ensure young Percy is punished." Nicolas said.

The judges went aside to consider the verdict. They came back after a few minutes.

"We have weighed all the evidence and Rita Skeeter has been declared guilty of all charges. Harry Potter is a minor and has the right to privacy. It is not in the public interest for everyone to know his every move or know what is in his letters. It is noted that criminal charges are being considered against you for the illegal mail interception charms. We will be recommending that full criminal charges are filed. You are to turn over everything you have on Mr. Potter to his legal guardian, including all the letters you intercepted. You are permanently forbidden from media related careers and you are fined 10,000 galleons. The book will be withdrawn at once and all copies destroyed. Finally, we will be recommending to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement that you spend at least one year in prison for violating a restraining order issued to protect the best interests of a minor. Finally, we are fining the Malfoy Estate the sum of 30,000 galleons for authorising this project and for the stuff the Malfoy child contributed."

Harry was considered fit enough to be discharged from the hospital wing two weeks after the Quidditch game. Nicolas returned to Hogwarts to collect him. Perenelle had collected his belongings after the incident (and detected tracking charms on them which she removed). Dumbledore arrived at the Hospital Wing.

"Nicolas, I beg you to reconsider. Harry belongs here." He pleaded.

"I gave ample warning Albus," Nicolas said, "but your intent in not punishing Draco Malfoy and the two Beaters for their actions is the straw that broke the camel's back."

"Things like this happen all the time in Quidditch." Dumbledore countered.

"If it was within the boundaries of the game, then I would not have said anything," Nicolas said, "But it happened AFTER the game was over. Then, to add insult to injury, Snape awards house points for what they did and nothing was done about it."

"Shouldn't Harry have the choice of where he goes to school? Maybe he would like to remain at the school which his parents attended?" Dumbledore asked.

"We've already discussed this. Harry is very disgruntled about the way he has been treated since Hagrid reintroduced him to this world. Oh, that reminds me - why did you not have Hagrid tell Harry how to get onto Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$'s, instead of relying on some big mouthed witch who discussed it in full range of Muggles?" Nicolas asked. Dumbledore remained silent. "Time to go Harry."

Nicolas and Harry made their way to leave when Dumbledore found his voice again.

"I'm afraid I can't allow Harry to leave. Please don't make me stop you." Dumbledore said, raising his wand, "I disagreed with him becoming your apprentice and now I know my decision was the right one. Say goodbye Harry, you won't see Nicolas again and I will arrange your return to the Dursleys. Since you were not there to renew the blood wards during the summer, you will need to remain there until the start of your third year to recharge them."

Nicolas turned around and pointed his hands towards Dumbledore. Smoke fired from them and diamonds rose up from the ground, surrounding the aging Headmaster. As the smoke died down, Harry could see that Dumbledore was now encased in a huge diamond.

"What was that?" he asked.

"A spell of my invention called Diamond Dust," Nicolas said, "a carefully guarded secret. I will be teaching you this spell in due course along with some others of my invention, but not until you're old enough to handle the power behind it. Albus, the spell will wear off in two hours, don't let your staff try to release you otherwise the diamonds will shatter, shattering you with them. You will be able to talk to them and warn them."

Dumbledore could only look in astonishment as Nicolas and Harry left the hospital wing. In the Great Hall, Ron looked in sorrow as his best friend left Hogwarts for the last time. He had tried to persuade his mother to let him transfer to Shamrock but she refused. She was under the belief that Hogwarts was the one and only place for her children to be educated and the idea of learning magic elsewhere

was heresy. Before going to the Hospital Wing, Dumbledore had forbidden him from seeing Harry before he went and actually went as far as to put an illegal ward on him to keep him away from Harry.

A week later, after Harry and the others had settled at Shamrock, Ron received a letter from Harry.

Dear Ron,

Shamrock is very different to Hogwarts. The only thing the same is that it's based in a castle. The uniforms are different - none of these fancy robes, but Muggle style clothing.

Muggle technology works here – they use charms developed by my mother to power them. It seems that our Ministry refuses to allow them to be used but Ireland is outside their jurisdiction, so they can use the charms without any issues.

Blood doesn't matter - purebloods, half-bloods and Muggleborns all get along well and the Muggleborns are allowed to be clever without getting punished for it. Very important thing here - the whole Boy-Who-Lived thing doesn't concern anyone. I'm allowed to be me without the tag I hate so much attached to me.

Lessons are so much different to Hogwarts. Transfiguration and Charms are the only lessons in which anyone learns something at Hogwarts. We actually had a Potions lesson in which we learnt something new. Instead of Snape's method of writing it down and telling us to make it (along with Slytherin sabotage), we learnt about the ingredients and how they worked to make the potion and very importantly, the consequences of mixing the wrong ingredients or putting them in the wrong order and stirring in the wrong direction at a particular time.

Hermione can actually be a know-it-all without being punished, there is talk of her being moved up a year but I think she'll refuse.

No Quidditch I'm afraid. There are six house teams and all are filled until at least next year. Talking of houses, there are three in all and unlike Hogwarts, all are allowed to mix with other houses and be friends. Talking of Quidditch, get Oliver Wood to have a word with McGonagall about letting your sister Ginny try out for Seeker – I've

seen her in action on the pitch at Hogwarts before I left and she looks very good.

I've got to go - it's lights out in a few minutes. I'll write soon with more details on the school.

Harry.

PS: Nicolas is going to write to your family to ask if you lot want to spend Christmas with us.

Hedwig delivered this letter to Ron a week after Harry left. Dumbledore watched in interest.

"Don't you dare think about it Albus." McGonagall said, noting Dumbledore's look.

"What?" he asked, pretending to be innocent.

"Don't you dare think about confiscating that letter," McGonagall said, "Unless there is a change to the school rules I don't yet know about, Mr. Weasley is legally entitled to receive mail from his best friend, who I might add, you pushed away. Also, don't think about getting Severus to confiscate it either. Letters are private unless there is evidence of rule breaking or illegal activity and last time I heard, receiving a letter from a friend to talk about a different school doesn't violate school rules or break the law."

She watched as Ron wrote a quick reply on the same parchment the letter from Harry came on and used Hedwig to send it. He then walked to his Potions lesson, in which Snape tried to deduct a large number of points from Gryffindor, mainly for Ron's so-called infractions, just because Harry was no longer at the school for him to bully. Ron vowed to get even with Snape, even if he had to write to his Great-Aunt Muriel about it – she wouldn't take any nonsense.

Please review, with thanks to those who do

As usual, I don't own anything.

Thanks to the many loyal readers who noticed the error that slipped in the previous chapter, when McGonagall used her powers to strip Snape of his right to deduct or award house points, then towards the end of the chapter, he deducted a large number from Ron. It slipped past my beta reader because it was a last minute addition to the chapter, after I got the chapter back from her and I had spent half-an-hour replacing faulty characters with speech marks and dashes. To make up for this error and as a thank you to those who pointed it out, I'm writing and uploading this chapter earlier than anticipated.

Chapter Nine

Ron was never one for writing letters. Since starting Hogwarts fifteen months before, he had never written letters home, the only letters he wrote were ones to Harry during the summer holidays (the ones which were intercepted by Rita Skeeter). For days, he put off writing to his Great-Aunt Muriel. But the straw that broke the camel's back came during one potions lesson where Draco Malfoy flung an item into the potion Ron was brewing, causing a massive explosion which harmed most of the Gryffindors. Snape gave Ron a six month detention and told him that if he could, he would deduct every point Gryffindor had. Ron refused to attend the detention and wrote to his Great-Aunt, whose name he believed still carried some weight.

Muriel Prewitt was a fine example of the famous Prewitt temper, which Molly Weasley enjoyed using. Apparently, all Prewitts had the same temper and Muriel was famous for using it to throw her weight around. She was surprised when an owl flew into her home and dropped a letter on her table. She picked it up and recognised her great-nephew Ron's handwriting. Wondering why he was writing to her, she opened the letter and began reading:

Great-Aunt Muriel,

You may be surprised at me writing to you but you're the only one I can turn to. Things at Hogwarts are getting beyond a joke and Mum won't let me transfer to Shamrock with Harry, even though he offered to help cover the costs.

On the day he left, Dumbledore came to me and told me I was forbidden from seeing him before he went. I was going to go and

see Harry beforehand but when I went to do it, I felt something keeping me away and I had to watch from the Great Hall as my best friend left, unable to do or say anything.

Snape's behaviour has gotten worse now he no longer has Harry to bully. In our last Potions class, Draco Malfoy caused a massive explosion which sent most of the Gryffindors in the class to the Hospital Wing. Instead of punishing Malfoy, he gave me a six month detention and told me that if he was able to, he would deduct all the points Gryffindor had. But that's nothing different, he gets away with anything at school, he even goes about calling people by the Mudblood title and all punishments McGonagall gives him are cancelled.

During the last Quidditch game, he used Incendio on Harry's broom and got the Slytherin Beaters to attack him after the game was finished and they got away with it, Snape even issued a 300 points bonus for "putting Potter in his place".

I tell you, it's getting unbearable - Ginny's been attacked three times by Slytherins and nothing is done about it - we were even forbidden to write to Mum and Dad about it! If nothing is done soon, I'm going to take Ginny and leave as soon as possible. Fred and George know all the secret passages out of the school and I'll get them to help me even if I have to swear some sort of Unbreakable Vow to them.

I'll write again as soon as I can but please help!

Ron

She looked at the letter and realised why he wrote to her instead of her niece. Oh, she'll do something or die trying. Besides Molly, she was the last remaining Prewitt and she knew Arthur was under Molly's thumb so she would use her position as Prewitt Matriarch to deal with this.

Muriel stormed into the Great Hall of Hogwarts a few days later after receiving legal advice.

"Albus Dumbledore - your actions are bringing great shame on this once fine school." She shouted.

"This is still a fine school." Dumbledore answered.

"What fine school allows students to savagely attack other students and lets them get away with it? What school allows students to sabotage potentially dangerous Potions and lets them get away with it? What fine school allows students to get away with attempted murder? What school hires Death Eaters as teachers? As matriarch of House Prewitt, I withdraw Ronald, Ginevra, Frederick, George and Percy, citing concerns over their safety." Muriel said.

"You can't do that," Dumbledore said, "Molly and Arthur need to give their consent."

"There is a little known law, which says that matriarch of a witch's maiden family can do whatever it takes to protect the best interests of their family, no matter what anyone else says."

Dumbledore knew he was beaten.

"Aunt Muriel," Percy said, "I'm taking my O.W.L's this year - to make it easier for me, can I remain here to take them and transfer afterwards please?"

Muriel considered things for a moment then gave her answer. "Very well. You may remain but if I hear of any bullying towards you by that Death Eater who murdered your uncles in retribution for what has happened here today, I will withdraw you faster than that. Do I make myself clear?" Percy nodded. "As for you four," she turned to Ron, Ginny and the twins, "I don't know why your mother insisted on sending you here instead of Shamrock, which I attended and where I was educated by Nicolas Flamel. I will be sorting out your transfer within the hour."

Shamrock School of Wizardry was a lot different from Hogwarts. There were three Houses - Rohan, Shire and Gondor. Hermione was curious about this as she read them as locations from The Lord of the Rings. It was explained that the events that took place in those books were real and writer JRR Tolken spent most of his life translating some Red Book which covered the events. Shamrock was founded by an ancient wizard at a time that even predated Hogwarts. As with Hogwarts, each house competed for the House Cup, but each house was divided into a Lower House, from first to fifth year and an Upper House, for sixth and seventh year. The combined Houses had two Quidditch teams each.

To Harry, the best thing about Shamrock was that no-one cared about the Boy-Who-Lived matter. While people were impressed he managed to vanquish Voldemort as a baby, because the Dark Lord didn't affect them personally, it was just something to be assigned to the history books. The Headmistress of Shamrock told him that while they thought it was sad he lost his parents as a baby, they weren't interested in the Boy-Who-Lived and Harry told her that he didn't mind that, in fact he was hoping no-one was interested because he wanted to throw that name aside. To be honest, the fact he was the apprentice of Nicolas Flamel carried more weight.

"It's like this," Headmistress A J Frost said to Harry on his first day (this was a week before he sent Ron the first letter), "We sympathise with you for losing your parents at such a young age. My government offered to send help to deal with Voldemort but your Ministry told us that if one of our Aurors so much as stepped foot on English soil, they would be arrested and sent to Azkaban on charges of attempting to overthrow the legal magical government. From that moment on, we stopped caring about it. Voldemort never attacked us and by rights, we didn't have to offer to help, but that would not have been the right thing to do."

Harry instantly understood. Then Professor Frost continued.

"Nicolas Flamel was educated here in his youth, that is when he was young. He also taught here for a number of years and was well liked. Like you have become a legend in England because of what you did back in 1981, Nicolas is legendary here and because you are his apprentice, people will respect you for it. He's probably told you this, but you have to be really good to become his apprentice. Every two weeks, you are to be permitted to return to your home to continue your apprentice studies."

"Thank you." Harry said.

"I've been informed about the way things work at Hogwarts. I can assure you that I do not tolerate my professors behaving the way your Severus Snape behaves. I can't stop teachers having their favourite students but there is no personal bias towards a particular house."

"How do I get put into a house?" Harry asked.

"We don't use a fancy hat like Hogwarts." Professor Frost said, "Your many times great-grandfather Nicolas Flamel was in Rohan." She explained about the houses, "We normally put pieces of paper into a hat, totalling the number of students attending. The name of each house is on equal amounts of paper. During our welcoming feast, each student is called and they pick a piece of paper out of the hat and they go into that house. If they want, family members can go into the same house their families went into."

"I'd like to go into his house then please." Harry answered. Frost wrote on a piece of modern looking paper with a modern pen.

"Unlike Hogwarts, we don't use parchment or quills. We embrace the modern world here. Several rooms have technology powered by magic, using charms developed by your mother. I heard your Ministry banned the use of the charms in England and at Hogwarts." Frost answered, "As for your request to be in Rohan House, your request is accepted. Your friends Miss Lovegood and Davies were placed in Rohan while Miss Granger was placed in Shire and Miss Greengrass was placed in Gondor. Unlike Hogwarts, we encourage students to mix with those from other houses. In case you were wondering how I know so much about Hogwarts, I'm close friends with a Christine Finnigan, whose grandson Seamus attends Hogwarts - he tells her what goes on then she tells me. It helps to gain as much intelligence on the enemy as possible. I'll have someone show you to the Rohan Common Room and show you the ropes."

She raised her wand and a silver animal went out and through the walls.

"That is a Patronus message. It's something that we teach during the sixth year but knowing Nicolas, he'll probably teach you it before."

There was a knock at the door and Frost let them enter. A second year girl came in.

"Ah, Alyson," Frost said, "Could you be kind enough to show Harry here around and then take him to the Rohan Common Room please?"

"Sure Professor." The young girl said. She led Harry out and started the tour.

An hour later, Alyson Rodat had shown him around the school, where the classrooms were, the Shamrock version of the Great Hall and finally, the route to the Rohan common room.

"Thank you for this." Harry said.

"It's my pleasure," she said, "I believe your friends are in here waiting for you."

The two went in. "This is Harry Potter, who is starting today." She said. The people in the common room came over and gave him a warm welcome. There were no stares at the scar or any requests to see it. Hermione, Daphne, Luna and Tracey came over, the latter jumping at Harry.

"It's my hero!" she said. No-one from Shamrock knew what he had saved her from.

"You're just in time for video night." One young man said.

"Every two weeks, we have a video night and Craig here," Alyson explained, "won the toss for this week."

People started to gather around the television and video. Hermione and the others started to tell Harry about the school. Then the group went over to join the students watching the video. Craig explained it was a cult TV serial from 1967 called The Tomb of the Cybermen, which featured a time traveller who with his friends " a young man from 1746 and a recently orphaned girl from 1866, joined an archaeological dig on a far away planet, trying to find the tombs of creature called Cybermen.

"Is it my imagination," Daphne asked after the program was finished, "that this Doctor person wanted those Cybermen found or released? He gave Klieg the solution to making everything work then he pressed a button to help open that hatch."

"It's not you," Craig said, "He does stuff like that a lot."

As soon as Muriel Prewitt went to the Burrow with Ron, Ginny, Fred and George, there were the signs of a major argument to come.

"What do you think you were doing, taking my children out of Hogwarts?" Molly Weasley asked.

"By acting in the best interests of this family," Muriel said, "I'm told that despite what's been going on there, you refuse to let them go anywhere else. Ginny has been attacked several times by Slytherins and all of your children FORBIDDEN to tell you about it. If Ronald hadn't written to me about this, who knows how far it would have gone."

"That is still no reason to take them out of Hogwarts," Molly answered and would have continued had Muriel not interrupted her.

"Dumbledore allows his pet Death Eater to bully anyone who is not in Slytherin - next time you talk to William and Charlie, ask them why they did not take Potions at NEWT level. There is a law which states a family matriarch can take control to protect the best interests of children in the family. Since you seem to worship the ground Dumbledore stands on and refuse to protect your children from such bullying and potentially lethal attacks, I am taking matters into my own hands. I will be arranging their transfer to Shamrock as soon as possible. You can't stop me Molly. If your father could see how you're allowing your children to be treated, he would be ashamed and your husband should stop messing about with that Muggle junk and see what's going on in the world. He has the potential to do well but his obsession with Muggles is holding him back and it's tarnishing your family's reputation. I aim to change that."

The following weekend, Harry returned to the Flamel residence for his latest apprenticeship lessons.

"You've progressed well Harry," Nicolas said, "I believe it is time to teach you to make your own stone."

"Won't that be a target for people like Dumbledore or Voldemort?" Harry asked.

"Only if they know about it," Nicolas said, "and the answer to your next question is yes, we've considered it. But it is soon to be our time to go."

"You can't go, not yet." Harry said.

"We've still got plenty of time to be together as a family before we die." Nicolas answered.

Harry could tell that he was not being told everything but kept quiet.

After Harry left to return to Shamrock, Perenelle went to Nicolas.

"We should tell him," she said, "that we don't have ten years."

"I know," Nicolas said, "but I can't. I want to make sure the proper arrangements are made first. You know what Albus is like now, he's not the Albus I used to know. If he got wind of this, he'd get Dursley out of prison, send Harry to him and he'll be dead before we are. We will tell him when everything is arranged and Dumbledore can't do a thing about it."

"Is it wise to teach Harry to make a stone? People will think we want his stone to make elixir to keep ourselves alive." Pernella asked.

"I want to pass down the knowledge before we die. The elixir from Harry's stone won't be able to keep us from death and because Albus took it upon himself to destroy the stone that was supposed to be safe from Voldemort at Hogwarts, we can't make anymore ourselves." Nicolas said, "I should have foreseen this before offering Harry the apprenticeship."

"You had no idea that the destruction of the stone would alter the properties of the elixir. What we should do now, is make ironclad arrangements for Harry and make the most of the time we have left with him." Pernella said, "At least we've given Harry something he really wanted – a family that loves him."

"Yes we have." Nicolas agreed.

When Harry returned to Shamrock, he went to find one of his friends. The first one he found was Tracey Davies.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"Something strange is going on," Harry said, "When I first took up the apprenticeship with Nicolas, he said by the time it was over, I could make my own Philosopher's Stone."

"Nothing wrong with passing on that bit of knowledge." Tracey answered.

"But I expected to be waiting at least a few years before we got to that stage. He told me earlier that he's going to start teaching me from next week." Harry replied.

"So you think he's up to something or what"" asked Tracey.

"He told me that with the remaining elixir he and Perenelle have left, they have ten years. He never said anything to me about making a stone to make the elixir for them. If that was an issue, he would just make a new one. I think something has happened to their existing elixir and Nicolas and Perenelle are dying."

Please review, with thanks to those who do.

Chapter Ten

"I'm sorry Miss. Prewitt," Headmistress Frost said to Muriel Prewitt, "We cannot accommodate all four of your relatives. We pushed things with the five transfers from Hogwarts the other week. All we can offer you is two spots. If I may suggest, send Ginervra to Beauxbatons and find somewhere else for those twins and allow Ronald to stay here so he is with his best friend. Great Lakes in America would be ideal for those twins."

"Thank you." Muriel said. It had taken some doing and many hours of arguing with Molly Weasley but she had finally relented. Within an hour, Ron was sorted into the Gondor house.

Meanwhile, Harry sat in his dorm pondering on what he could do for Nicolas and Pernella. Then his chain of thought was broken by his dorm-mate Craig (the Doctor Who nut).

"Not another hoax!" he was shouting. Harry looked at him and he was reading Doctor Who Magazine.

"What's another hoax?" Harry asked.

"Someone was thought to have Tenth Planet episode 4 but the tape turned out to be blank." Craig said. He explained how in the 1970's the Muggle television company that made the program destroyed many episodes.

"What a waste." Harry said, "To go to all that trouble only to destroy it later. What was so special about this episode?"

Craig looked at Harry as if he had just landed.

"I don't know anything about this program, or others." Harry explained, not wanting to go into detail on how the Dursleys wouldn't let him watch TV programs.

"That is the Holy Grail of all episodes. It's the first episode in which the Doctor regenerates and it's the final episode of the first story to feature the Cyberman villains." Craig answered.

"What do you mean by regenerates?" Harry asked, suspecting something.

"The Doctor is an alien known as a Time Lord. At times, they can change their appearance which also heals any wounds. Tenth Planet sees the Doctor regenerate for the first time, due to extreme old age from a man who looks to be in his 70's to a man in his 40's."

"Thanks for that." Harry said, before going back to bed. He had a thought. What if I could do something to make Nicolas and Pernella heal themselves and make themselves younger?

Harry was in the library the following day after lessons looking at potions books to see what there was about healing and the possibility of making someone younger. He made numerous notes on the subject. Afterwards, he went to see Professor Mac Taylor, the Potions master.

"What can I do for you Mr. Potter?" he asked.

"Mac (the Professor told them that during classes or after classes, the students could call him Mac unless they were in the presence of another teacher), the Flamels are dying. Their stone is destroyed and their existing stocks of elixir of life are worthless," Harry answered, "I'm trying to find a way to save them. What do you know about de-aging potions?"

"They take someone back to their infancy and takes their memories. There won't be any mention of it in any books in the Shamrock library however." Mac answered, "Anyhow, with people of their age, it will only take a couple of hundred years off their lives and they will still lose their memories."

"There's got to be something that I can do," Harry said, "They've done so much for me, we've found out we're family and they're going to die."

Mac wrote on a piece of paper and passed it to Harry. "Owl order this book – it contains a recipe for a de-aging potion. Think about what I've taught you. Find out about the properties of the potion. There is something in there that takes memories. Also, find out about other healing potions and remedies and consider creating a new potion. If you need any advice, come to me and I will give you what advice I can, even put you in touch with a contact of mine."

"Thank you." Harry said.

"No problem," Mac said, "it's a good way to get back at Dumbledore and Snape. I created a new potion five years ago and made the mistake of showing it at St. Mungo's. Those two managed to get hold of it and forged enough paperwork to make Snape out to be the creator. I lost all rights as the creator of the potion in England although the Irish Ministry and other worldwide Ministries have recognised my claim. Frost helped me back it up and I am eternally grateful to her. You pull it off and I'll see to it you skip a year in Potions."

With days, Harry had ordered the book and it arrived. It described the potion in great detail. He also ordered a Herbology book which further described the ingredients used. Taking a Muggle notebook and pen, he made a list of what the potion needed to do:

Turn Nicolas and Pernella into 30 year olds

Retain their memories

Heal all ailments

Allows them to make a new stone

He went to Hermione and told her of his plan.

"That's impossible!" she said, "Potion masters have tried to centuries to do what you're doing without success."

"I thought you'd try to support me in this, not try to stop me." Harry said.

"I'm not trying to stop you Harry," she replied, "I'm just trying to tell you not to get your hopes up. Twelve year old wizards don't just stumble upon their own ways to cheat death."

"This potion is going to work even if I have to spend all the money in my vault to do so." Harry said.

Harry decided to approach Daphne and Tracey. Being magic-raised, he figured they might know something.

"My father tells me that phoenix tears have healing properties and can heal a lot of ailments to which there is no antidote," Tracey said, "Mix the tears into the potion and that might help."

"Thank you." Harry said. He continued making his notes, so detailed it would put Hermione to shame. He asked Mac to check with his contacts to see if they had phoenix tears for sale. It was via Mac he found out that Dumbledore had a phoenix. He resolved not to ask Dumbledore to get some tears unless he really had too. He knew Dumbledore would try to blackmail him into either returning to Hogwarts and/or the Dursleys. Harry also decided not to tell Nicolas and Pernella about the potion, he planned to surprise them.

Ron's first week at Shamrock was a slight improvement than at Hogwarts. Granted, he didn't have to put up with Snape and the Slytherins, but he still didn't put more of an effort into his work. The only thing he did pay close attention to was the Quidditch matches. Hermione could be seen having a go at him more than once to start doing better at his work because she would not let him copy her homework.

Ginny however flourished at Beaubatons. Without Snape and the Slytherins to worry about, her grades improved. She however, was homesick. She knew Muriel took her out of Hogwarts for her own safety and she was thankful. One day, she was met by a girl with long silver-blond hair and blue eyes. She introduced herself as Fleur Delacour and she took the young girl under her wing.

Harry and Hermione had not spoken to each other for a week after he told her about his plans involving the potion. Daphne went up to her one day.

"I don't believe you." She said.

"Why is that?" Hermione asked.

"You're supposed to be Harry's best friend. I don't know him as well as you do but if he came to me with a plan to help his mentor and grandfather, I would support him anyway I can but you seem to live by the book and what the book says can or cannot be done." Daphne said, "How do you think most of the potions in the world got created if they were not in the book? Experimentation. If Harry thinks

he can do it, we should support him. Considering what Dumbledore is trying to do involving him, what do you think will happen when the Flamel's die?"

"He might go and live with Sirius Black." Hermione answered.

"Like Dumbledore will allow that to happen, considering he is an ex-convict, despite no trial. He'll probably find some way to send him back to those Dursleys, even if he has to arrange for Harry's uncle to be freed from prison." Daphne said.

"How do you know about that?" Hermione asked.

"My father has many business interests in the Muggle world and gets the Muggle Financial Times. It was mentioned in the summer." Daphne answered.

In the meantime, Nicolas and Pernella were visiting a solicitor to file their wills.

"So Professor, the bulk of your estate is to go to your great-grandson Harry Potter, the sum of 100,000 galleons are to be awarded to Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood. Also, Miss. Granger will be permitted to help herself to any fifty books in your library. It is your wish that Harry continue to attend Shamrock and you wish to retain my services to ensure the restraining order regarding unauthorised books, magazines, merchandise and related products is enforced." The solicitor said.

"That's right. We would also like to retain your services to ensure a restraining order is enforced against the following people: Albus Percival Wolfric Brian Dumbledore, Vernon Dursley, Petunia Dursley-Evans, Dudley Dursley and Margarie Dursley. These people are also to be put on a list blocking them from any form of access to the Flamel and Potter vaults.

"As for guardianship, I want it transferred to the Greengrass family. They can be relied upon to help Harry." Nicolas said. He had contacted them beforehand and got a promise of help.

"It will be done." The solicitor promised.

After his latest defeat in which Muriel Prewitt had withdrawn all the Weasley children bar Percy from Hogwarts, Dumbledore went to Cornelius Fudge to get him to enact some ancient law forcing Harry to return to Hogwarts.

"No," Fudge said, "I will not enact the Education Act. Clause 5 states that a relative may enrol a minor witch or wizard at the school they attended if they feel it is in their best interests."

"Harry's best interests are served being at Hogwarts." Dumbledore said.

"I have received a number of complaints about actions at your school, especially those involving two professors. Action needs to be taken Dumbledore. I have created Educational Decree 26 which creates the position of High Inquisitor. I have appointed a close advisor of mine to become High Inquisitor who will inspect the school, attend lessons, observe activities there and will report directly to me and any action I deem necessary will be taken, even if it means sacking you."

"Very well Cornelius," Dumbledore said, knowing he was beaten for now. He couldn't put Fudge under the Imperious as since the arrest of Lucius Malfoy and Delores Umbridge, there were new wards on his office which prevented such curses from being used. "What about Mr. Potter?"

"He can still attend Shamrock if he wishes. You are to leave him alone. If he wants to return to Hogwarts at a later date, it will be up to him, but you are NOT to force the issue. I have been instructed by the Flamel's legal representation that a restraining order has been granted against you. You are not to go anywhere near Shamrock or any Potter or Flamel properties."

Dumbledore decided to visit the Department of Magical Games and Sports where former Beater Ludo Bagman was reading some of the latest results from his former team.

"Professor, what can I do for you?" Bagman asked.

"Remember how I helped clear your name after you were accused of being a Death Eater and got you this job? I'm calling in a favour."

"What do you want me to do?" Bagman asked.

"I want you to issue a life ban for Harry Potter from playing Quidditch, either professionally, at a sports academy and in educational establishments." Dumbledore said.

"Is that a wise thing to do?" Bagman asked, "I've heard about his talent – catching the Snitch after five minutes of gameplay? Many teams would be knocking down his door to sign him."

"It's for his own good," Dumbledore said, "He's made many changes that will put him in danger."

"You do know Dumbledore, that this life ban only applies to England. He will be able to play at other schools, overseas teams and academies." Bagman said.

"He's not allowed to leave the country, so that is not an issue." Dumbledore said – this statement was a lie. Bagman wrote on the parchment declaring that Harry James Potter was now banned from Quidditch for life. Only he, Minister Fudge or Amelia Bones could override it. He filed it in his desk as Dumbledore left, thanking him. Bagman watched things for a while. He did owe Dumbledore a debt which was now fulfilled. He remembered the Pensieve memory of the five minute game he had been sent by McGonagall. He took the parchment out and put it back on his desk. He then wrote a note on another piece of parchment and duplicated it. Both turned into paper airplanes which went flying.

Five minutes later, Fudge and Madam Bones came into the office. Bagman explained what Dumbledore had done.

"He can't do that. The only bans he can issue are at school if a match is to be missed due to detention or the student has committed some serious offence." Amelia Bones said.

"We'll clear this up." Fudge said. All three signed on the parchment that Harry was not subject to any life bans from Quidditch. He also filled in a document stating that Harry was not banned from leaving the country (just in case Dumbledore tried something).

As the weeks went past, the ingredients for the potion arrived. The most expensive were the phoenix tears and Harry had to send a

signed note from Mac Taylor with the order because the Professor was a Potions Master and he confirmed that it was to be used for educational purposes.

"So, the aconite is responsible for the memory loss." Harry said to himself, reading the detailed instructions. He made a note to leave out the aconite of his potion. "Phoenix tears are the key to the healing process so they stay." He was making notes that detailed, it would put Hermione to shame.

"This looks promising so far," Mac said, looking at the notes, "Have you worked out how to deal with the amount of years taken off yet?"

"I was thinking of adding more of the herbs which cover that part of it. I do have a problem however – what if it doesn't work and it kills them straight away?" Harry asked.

"They're dying anyway Harry. If this kills them instantly, then you will be saving them a very painful death." Mac said, "If you explain to them what the potion will do, it will be up to them to take a chance with it."

"I'm going to hide these notes in my Gringotts vault after it's done. I can't risk these ending up in the hands of Dumbledore and Snape. Who knows what they could do with this knowledge. Voldemort was going to use the Philosopher's Stone last year to revive himself, just think of what he could do if he had this potion."

"You raise a good point there Harry," Mac said, "I recommend telling Frost about it though. If you're creating new potions on school grounds, it would be best to let her know."

That evening, the two told her about the plan and she wished Harry well on the success of the plan.

Finally, the research was all finished and it was time to start brewing. Mac recommended that Harry do it in the school's potions labs under his supervision, for the sake of safety.

"I won't interfere Harry, unless there is a cause to interfere, for example, if you were to become unconscious. But besides from emergencies, it's all yours, good luck." Mac said.

Harry lit the fire under his cauldron and using a Nicolas taught spell, adjusted it until it was the right temperature. Following his notes, he put in the ingredients one by one. The first ingredient to go in was three vials of armadillo bite. Using his wand, he then half-filled the cauldron with hot water, then he stirred the potion anti-clockwise for five minutes. While it simmered, he put in some porcupine quills followed by daisy and ginger roots. Two vials of Murtlap essence were then poured in. Clockwise stirring was then done. At this stage, the potion was purple in colour.

The next part of the potion was to crush a bezoar, dragon horn (from a Hungarian Horntail), graphorn and a moonstone. This was a time consuming job, as all three ingredients had to be fine powder. Before these could be put into the potion, pomegranate had to be added. The powdered ingredients were then put in. The potion exploded slightly before changing colour to silvery grey.

"Right, we need to leave this for an hour before the tears can go in." Harry said. He had been working on the potion for the last four hours. Mac got some Butterbeer out. He had brought some from a nearby village for the occasion.

"Here's to a successful potion." He said, toasting the work. An hour later, Harry poured in the two vials of Pheonix tears (which cost him 500 galleons and he hoped Nicolas wouldn't find out otherwise it would ruin the surprise). With a puff of smoke, the potion turned into a clear liquid. Two anti-clockwise stirs later followed by six clockwise stirs, Harry proclaimed the potion finished.

"Just need to leave it for three weeks and it can be used." He said.

"Excellent stuff Harry." Mac said.

Harry woke up late the following day. He was very white. He stumbled out of bed and vomited. Harry looked at his watch after putting his glasses on but he couldn't see the time – his vision was all blurry. He stumbled out of the dorm room.

It was tricky to do so, with blurred vision. He began to make his way down the stairs, but stumbled and with a loud crash, fell down them and crashed into a wall. Everyone ran up the stairs to see what was happening. His room-mate Craig bent down and looked at him.

"He's burning up. Help me," he said.

Please review, with thanks to those who do.

This is being uploaded unbeta'ed. My computer is in for repair and I wrote this entire chapter using my PDA and Pocket Word (and uploaded using the same machine) but I don't have e-mail on it. As soon as I get my computer back, I'll send it to my beta reader for editing and will reupload.

The first story from my Preview Fic will be A Year at Hogwarts, being the most simple of the stories to complete and which has the most extensive notes.

Chapter Eleven

A few hours later, Headmistress Frost convened a meeting in her office. Mac was there with the Flamels, Hermione and the Matron.

"Mr. Potter has grade 4 dragon-pox," the Matron said, "The only way he could have got that is continued exposure to a newborn dragon."

"The Hogwarts gamekeeper Hagrid got hold of a Norwegian Ridgeback egg and Ron, Harry and I were there when he hatched." Hermione said.

"But why is Mr. Potter sick while the two of you are alright?" Frost asked.

"There was a series of dragonpox inoculations five years ago due to a major outbreak of the illness," the Matron said, "Muggleborns were also included in the guise of Muggle vaccinations. Mr. Potter should have received them at his Muggle school."

"You needed and still need a guardian's consent before these are given," Nicolas said, "Knowing the Dursley family, they would have refused to allow him to have them. As his godfather, Sirius Black has a right to know about this. I'll let him know as soon as possible."

The Matron went to Little Winging Primary School the following day and asked to see their nurse.

"I remember administering those inoculations," the nurse said, "I don't recall giving one to Harry Potter though. I sent a few letters to his guardians requesting permission to give him the inoculations and they refused. They've also refused to attend his medical but they did attend their son's. What's wrong?"

"Harry has been taken ill with a serious illness the inoculations should have prevented." The Matron said.

"I warned them," the Nurse replied, "He's had a large number of absentees from the school, ranging from a day or two to an entire year. We contacted the Dursleys who told us he had run away. We didn't believe them and reported things to social services who told us upon visiting the Dursley household that only three people lived there. I did manage to have him given an eye test and the Headmaster forced them to get Harry glasses otherwise they would be reported to the police and social services. They got him a very cheap pair which I witnessed Dudley Dursley break."

"Thank you." The Matron said.

For the rest of the day, she visited doctor's surgeries around the town to find out Harry's medical history. There was no record of him there at all. Some expressed concern that the Dursleys had not registered him while they knew of the family.

Finally, the Matron went to St. Mungo's to request Harry's file.

"I'm sorry, but Mr. Potter's file is sealed. It will take a signed permission slip from Professor Dumbledore to unseal it." The receptionist said. The matron asked to see a supervisor who came.

"Listen here. Harry Potter is lying in a hospital bed at Shamrock Academy with Grade Four dragon-pox and I need to know his medical history. I also need to know his family medical history so I know how to deal with it. When permission was refused for him to have the dragon-pox vaccination, you should have forced the issue. Now, I want those files and now." The matron said.

"We cannot release these files without the permission of Albus Dumbledore. He had them sealed for Mr. Potter's protection." The supervisor said.

The matron left in a huff.

Nicolas decided to pay Dumbledore a visit later that day.

"You don't look well old friend," Dumbledore said, "I must say I'm surprised to see you here. What can I do for you?"

"I would like you to have Harry's medical file at St. Mungo's unsealed." Nicolas said.

"Why is that?" Dumbledore asked.

"Harry is suffering from grade 4 dragon-pox, thanks to that Ridgeback your gamekeeper hatched earlier in the year. We've checked his muggle files and discovered he's not had any inoculations, including the dragon-pox one given to Muggleborns, thanks to the Dursleys." Nicolas said.

"I had no idea." Dumbledore said.

"Why didn't Poppy Pomfrey not notice any of this on a medical?" Nicolas asked.

"She never gave him one," Dumbledore said, "I didn't want his complete medical history to be accessible to anyone and be used against him. There were people like Delores Umbridge and Lucius Malfoy who would use it for evil purposes."

"That is a load of rubbish and you know it," Nicolas said, "You blocked the medical so the Dursley's abuse of him would remain hidden." Dumbledore said nothing. "This is what you will do. You will sign the release of all Potter medical files otherwise I will go to the Minister and the DMLE and get them to authorise it. If they get involved, then you will be investigated in full detail. Who knows, they might get the idea that you told the Dursleys not to allow the inoculations to take place. While I'm here, what do you know about Harry missing an entire year of school? You set the wards on Privet Drive, so you can key them not to allow him outside."

"It was at this time, the Dursley's attitude towards him weakened the blood wards to a point where if he continued leaving the house to attend school, they would fall and I would be unable to restore them. So, I told the Dursleys to keep Harry in the house and keyed the wards to forbid him from leaving. It seems the free Death Eaters, who had escaped prison by claiming to be under the Imperious curse found out where he lived and actually attempted several kidnapping attempts, which failed thanks to the wards. Trust me, I

didn't want him to suffer because of it and when the wards indicated that Vernon Dursley nearly killed him, I went straight to Privet Drive, obliviated the memories of what happened from everyone concerned, took Harry for treatment at St. Mungo's and I ordered the sealing of his file. I also obliviated the memory of his treatment from the Healers. Finally, I modified the wards so that if they tried to be violent again, they would just go and do something else."

"Why didn't you just remove him from their household?" Nicolas asked, "You could have looked after him?"

"It would have been impossible. If anyone got wind I was raising the Boy-Who-Lived, then everyone would have gotten involved. As you know, a lot of departments were under the pay of the Death Eaters. If it had gotten out I had Harry, how long do you think it would take someone like Lucius Malfoy to bribe someone to gain custody. Then how long would he survive?"

"You're a bit overzealous of your desire to keep him safe. Yes, James and Lily gave their lives to save him, but they didn't do it just to keep him a prisoner in what he considers his own private prison. They gave their lives so he could live," Nicolas answered, "Pernella and I can give him a good home and we can teach him how to take his place in our society."

Dumbledore broke down. "I only wanted to keep him safe. I wanted to keep him away from those who would take advantage of his fame and the Potter money. If I had any idea the Dursleys withheld valuable medical care from him, I would have sorted it out. I am guilty of withholding the dragon-pox vaccine however. I couldn't risk his location being discovered." He signed a piece of parchment and passed it over to Nicolas. "Should you tell Harry any of this, please tell him not to think too badly of me."

"Harry has no cause to think good of you – he barely knows you. All he knows of you is your attempts to control him, prevent him from becoming an apprentice and you allowing Snape and the Slytherins to bully him and other non-Slytherins and letting them get away with it. Granted you're not going to eradicate bullying overnight, but the point in being a Headmaster is to show people there will be consequences for their actions. If Snape taught in the Muggle world, he would be fired faster than that. Harry spent ten years being treated like vermin by his relatives who suffered no consequences

for their actions until they embarrassed themselves at a business meeting at the Ritz.

"While I think about it – why didn't the Hogwarts wards detect a dragon egg, let alone a dragon on the grounds? I will not be perusing action against Hagrid, he is simply misguided and Harry thinks a lot of him. If you want my advice Albus, you're taking on too much in your old age. You say Voldemort is going to return someday – why not find out some way to prevent it from happening?"

"It's easier said than done," Dumbledore said, "I believe Tom Riddle created multiple Horocruxes to help him achieve immortality."

"Did you say Tom Riddle?" Nicolas asked. Dumbledore nodded, "Lucius Malfoy gave a diary belonging to a Tom Marvolo Riddle to a student in Florish and Blotts during the summer. I detected Dark Magic from it and slipped it away. I discovered it was a Horocrux and destroyed it. People say you were the one Voldemort was most afraid of – you know him better than anyone else, use what you know to finish him once and for all."

And with that, Nicolas left, leaving Dumbledore to ponder his actions. He was curious on how a Horocrux ended up in the hands of Lucius Malfoy and why he tried to pass it onto someone else.

Armed with the permission slip, the Shamrock Matron went to St. Mungo's with Nicolas to get the Potter medical files which they read back at the school.

"This confirms the attack by Vernon Dursley," the Matron said, "I never realised Muggles could be so vicious to magic users. Normal birth, nothing wrong for his first year until his parents went into hiding. You would have thought that those idiots at St. Mungo's would give him the inoculations he was forced to miss while he was there."

Harry spent the next month in a magical coma. Healers gave him all sorts of medications to help him but nothing seemed to work. They kept him wired up to a Muggle style life support machine to monitor his life signs, dragon-pox having the potential to be very fatal. He was also in a private room (it was the case for situations like this). Hermione spent what time she could with him – not long after Daphne had words with her, she had apologised to Harry over her

plain dismissals about his potion idea. He accepted it, knowing that she was one of those by-the-book types.

Hermione walked up to Harry after one of his many trips to the library.

"Harry," she began, "I want to apologize for what I said. I shouldn't have put your idea down. I've always been lead to believe that people can't go beyond what books say,"

"Don't worry about it Hermione." Harry answered, "Friends again?"

"Friends again." She said and the two shared a hug, "So, how's your research going?"

Harry showed her the extensive notes.

"Wow – you've sure done your research here." Hermione said, "Very impressive. Do you think it'll work?"

"Hopefully." Harry answered.

One night, after the Matron had done her checks, the steady beeping of the machine died away. The line on the display went flat and a high pitch beep replaced the steady beep. The Matron rushed over and scanned Harry with her wand. She then activated an emergency button before trying to save him.

Harry woke up in an empty nothingness. Looking around, he could see an old man who looked a bit like him. Harry walked over to him.

"Greetings Harry Potter. My name is – I am one of your ancestors. My name is Ignotus Peverell." The man said.

"Am I dead?" Harry asked, with fear in his voice.

"The dragon-pox has claimed your life, but you are not dead yet due to certain circumstances." Ignotus said.

"What are they?" Harry asked, curious.

"When Voldemort tried to kill you after killing your mother, he unintentionally turned you into a Horocrux. While the dragon-pox

has killed the soul-fragment he left in you, it is up to you if it takes you as-well."

"Horocrux?" Harry pondered, "Nicolas said that the diary of Tom Riddle that he destroyed was a Horocrux."

"That is right," Ignotus said, "It was one of many Tom Riddle, who later became Lord Voldemort created. You have a choice to make, like I once did. You can either follow me into the afterlife and join your parents or you can return to the real world and complete your destiny. You have a long life ahead of you."

"What do you mean, you made a similar choice?" asked Harry, curious.

"My brothers and I saw a river we couldn't cross, so we conjured a bridge using magic. Death caught us and gave us gifts. My eldest brother got a wand which was the most powerful in the world. Someone ended up killing him for it. My other brother got a stone which allowed him to bring back the dead but after a while, he took his own life. Both of them died without family to carry on their family name. I was given a cloak of invincibility and I used it to hide from Death. After living my life, I passed the cloak onto my son and greeted Death willingly."

"And the cloak was passed down..." Harry began.

"Through the generations until it was received by you and you have used it well so far. So far, you used it to prevent Voldemort taking the Philosopher's Stone and you also used it to help a friend, that makes you worthy of the name Peverell and Potter." The old man said.

"If it was a year ago and I was here, I'd go with you and be with my parents. I had nothing to live for but a life where savage beatings, attempted murder and slavery were the order of the day." Harry said, "But now, I don't know what to do."

"We know of those Dursleys and Death has promised to make them suffer for what they have done." Ignotus said.

"I have a nice family life with Nicolas and Pernella, I've developed that potion that will hopefully save them..." he began.

"You also have your core circle of friends and will make more. That girl Tracey really likes you.." the old man continued but stopped.

"Tracey Davies likes me?" Harry asked.

"Ever since you saved her. Unlike most of these girls who loves the Boy-Who-Lived, she likes Harry Potter and I can see you two being very happy together. Should you choose to return to the real world, I will give you the knowledge of where Voldemort hid his four remaining Horocruxes. As he is now, a disembodied spirit, he is harmless but thanks to the Horocruxes, there is a ritual that will restore him to a body. Destroy them and he dies forever." Ignotus said.

"Is this conversation real or am I dreaming it?" Harry asked.

"It is in your head Harry, but why should it not be real?" Ignotus replied., "If you choose to go back, you won't be able to wake up straight away, your body will need to adjust to the destruction of the Horocrux."

"Wait a minute – can I see my parents first?" Harry asked.

"I'm afraid not Harry," Ignotus answered, "they were taken into the afterlife but, along with the rest of the Potters and Peverells, as I cheated Death originally, I was chosen to speak to you. You must make your choice now."

Minutes passed while Harry was talking. Then his life signs returned to normal. The Matron breathed a sigh of relief as this happened. She also noticed Harry's scar vanishing.

A couple of days later, Tracey Davies was sitting next to Harry – his inner circle had decided to keep watch over him in shifts. She was working on some homework when Harry slowly opened his eyes.

Please review, with thanks to those who do.

This is the first part in a two part update for the holidays. I've send both this and Chapter 13 to my beta reader, but not knowing when she'd be able to proof-read them, I've uploaded Part 1 of the update now and will update it when the beta'ed chapter comes back. (I could have put both chapters together but it would have meant a 20 page chapter)

PS: The next chapter will be uploaded on Christmas Eve.

Chapter Twelve

Tracey Davies, who was on a 'watching Harry' shift called for the Matron. She came over and scanned Harry with her wand.

"Well Mr. Potter, you gave us a fright there." She said.

"What happened?" he asked in a quiet voice.

"You had dragon-pox. Your friend Miss. Granger told us that you were around a newborn Norwegian Ridgeback. That, without the inoculations was a very risky thing to do." She replied.

"I've never heard of dragon-pox. I was muggle raised and I was never allowed to learn anything about the magical world at Hogwarts unless it was anything to do with the lessons and even then, only what was deemed necessary to know." Harry countered, "The Flamels have taught me all they can about our world since the summer holidays."

"We'll have to further your education somehow." The Matron said.

"How long have I been here?" Harry asked.

"Three months." The Matron said. Harry looked shocked. "You were ill all through Christmas."

Harry looked around – there were cards everywhere.

"Good luck tokens from friends and admirers," the Matron said, "everyone was most concerned and when it spread into Christmas time, you got more cards."

"Professor Taylor has told me he dealt with the final stages of your extra credit Potion," Tracey said, "and put it under the preservation effects of a stasis charm."

Half-an-hour later, the Flamels arrived along with Hermione, Daphne, Luna and Ron. Mac and Headmistress Frost also came in. There were hugs all round from family and friends.

"Glad to see you back with us Mr. Potter," Frost said, "As soon as you can leave, you are being granted compassionate leave for seven days to make up for the Christmas you missed."

"Thank you." Harry replied.

"But when you return, I expect you to work hard to make up for the lesson's you've missed. If necessary, I can arrange for you to take exams during the holidays and if Miss. Granger's reputation is to be believed, she's made detailed notes on all the lessons ready for you to study." Frost continued.

Everyone laughed and Hermione's face went red.

"That sounds very like Hermione." Harry said.

A couple of days later, Harry was released from the hospital wing.

"Now then Mr. Potter," the Matron said, "Your magical core is still recharging from the dragon-pox so you are not to cast any spells until you return."

"Thank you." Harry said.

On the way to the entrance hall where Nicolas was waiting for him, he went to Professor Taylor's office to collect the potion.

"I've cancelled the stasis charm on it," Mac said, "Because this is a new potion, I had no idea if leaving it unprotected would do it any damage. I checked on it for you and sorted out the finishing touches. This is an unbreakable vial so it can't get damaged on the return trip."

"Thank you Mac." Harry said.

"No problem Harry," Mac said, "Let me know when they take it and it works."

"Will do." Harry replied. The two shook hands and Harry left. He met up with Nicolas who had a Portkey ready to use. Harry felt a tug on his naval as the Portkey transported them to the Flamel household.

"There is something we need to discuss." Harry said, "Quite urgently."

"I can tell this cannot wait Harry, so let's take a seat and I'll hear what you have to say."

The two sat down in the living room and Harry told the story of seeing his descendant.

"He told me I would know the locations of Horocruxes created by Voldemort – the diary you destroyed in the summer was one of them." Harry said.

"I believe Dumbledore said that Voldemort's real name was Tom Riddle. He also speculated that he had taken steps to prevent his death." Nicolas said.

"The diary was one. There is also a locket which belonged to Slytherin – that is in the main Black Family Home. There is also a ring, also belonging to Slytherin which is in a shack in Little Hangton, apparently the home of Voldemort's mother, uncle and father. A diadem, owned by Ravenclaw is in something called the Room of Requirement at Hogwarts. Finally, there is Hufflepuff's cup which is being stored in the Lestrage vault at Gringotts. I'm told that if we destroy them, we destroy Voldemort." Harry said.

"There is no we involved Harry," Nicolas said, "You're still recovering from a serious illness. I'll get Sirius to help me. He can get the diadem from Hogwarts and let me into the Black family home to recover the locket. You can watch as we destroy them though."

"How do we get the cup from Gringotts?" Harry asked.

"Part of the treaty with the goblins states that Dark items of this nature are not allowed to be stored in Gringotts. If I present this

information to the goblins, then they will take the cup and destroy it themselves." Nicolas said.

"One more thing – when you find the ring, DON'T put it on, there is a curse on it and it will kill you." Harry said.

"Thank you for the warning." Nicolas said. He left the room and wrote a letter to Sirius. The next morning, he got a reply.

Nicolas, Harry,

I'm ever so glad you recovered. I was most worried and so were a few of your friends here, especially Neville Longbottom and your Quidditch team-mates.

I can't say I've heard of this Room of Requirement but I'm going to ask the house-elves that work here when they know. As soon as I find it, I'll bring it to you and I'll also take you to the Black family home to recover this locket.

Dumbledore's been acting strange – no-one's barely seen him and he seems to have passed the everyday running of the school to McGonagall, who berated him for two months for chasing you out of Hogwarts. I've kept her up to date on how you are and she was also most concerned when you fell ill. You should have seen her give Hagrid a lecture when she found out about the dragon he hatched in his hut and how trying to keep him out of trouble got you, Hermione and Neville into trouble.

I'll see the two of you in a couple of days – I'll bring your Christmas present with me.

See you soon.

Sirius.

"Why is he telling people at Hogwarts for?" asked Harry.

"He's only telling your friends Harry, don't you think they have the right to know. Anyhow, Sirius made them take an unbreakable vow not to say anything to the press or anyone else. I heard Molly Weasley was banging on the door of Shamrock, demanding to be let in to see you but they refused."

"I suppose so," Harry said, "I didn't think I had any friends at Hogwarts – most just wanted to know the Boy-Who-Lived."

The following day, it was 'Horocrux Hunting'. Sirius had roped in his cousin Trainee Auror Tonks to deal with Gringotts while he got the horocruxes from Hogwarts and the Black Family Home. Nicolas was going to get the ring.

Tonks walked into Gringotts and found a teller.

"Master Goblin," she said (Nicolas had told her how to address the goblins properly), "I have reason to believe that Lord Voldemort had his loyal servant Bellatrix Lestrange store a Horocrux in the Lestrange vault. I give my oath that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge."

The goblins looked very evil at this piece of news. The teller ordered a goblin to raid the Lestrange vault to find the Horocrux. Twenty minutes later, said goblin returned with a big gold cup in his hands.

"Master," he said, "This is indeed a Horocrux."

"Thank you Griphook." The goblin said, "Trainee Auror Tonks – if you will come with me, you can oversee the destruction of this dark object which violates the human / goblin treaties. Griphook," he turned back to the goblin who retrieved the object, "You will receive a huge bonus for your service here – the Lestrange vaults are to be seized, you may take your bonus from there."

"Thank you." Griphook said before leaving. The other goblin led Tonks into a ritual room where with powerful goblin magic, the Horocrux was destroyed.

"Many thanks Lord Goblin." Tonks said to the goblin.

"Our thanks to you Trainee Auror, for bringing this to our attention." The goblin said.

Meanwhile, at Hogwarts, Sirius had got the information about the Room of Requirement from a house-elf. He had also asked Ravenclaws about the diadem who then showed him a replica. The room created (to hide things) was huge. He went through everything

until he found the diadem. He took it with him before leaving the grounds.

He apparated to the Black family home in London. Ignoring the shouting and abuse from a portrait of his mother, he went to the drawing room where he saw the locket described by Harry. Sirius took it out and returned to the Flamel household.

In the village of Little Hangton, Nicolas walked to a small shack described by Harry. He scanned for traps and disabled many wards. He noticed that among them were Muggle repelling charms along with wards designed to seriously harm. After a search, he found the ring on an old table which he picked up. Remembering Harry's warning, he put it in an ordinary ring box and left.

Sirius, Tonks and Nicolas reconvened at the Flamel household. Sirius presented his treasures while Tonks reported the destruction of the cup horocrux. Nicolas put the ring on a table while Sirius did the same with the locket and diadem.

"Come and watch this Harry." Nicolas said. Harry joined them and stood out of the way as Nicolas and Sirius cast a fire spell at the three items. Screams could be heard as the horocruxes in them were destroyed. Eventually, the screams died away.

In Albania, a spirit was about to leave a possessed animal, which was dying. Suddenly, it started screaming as the animal died. Without the horocruxes to sustain his life force, the last traces of Voldemort died with the animal.

In Azkaban Prison, Death Eaters with the Dark Mark on fell to the ground, clutching their arms. The Dementors detected the dark magic radiating from the cells and went to them, deciding to give each Death Eater the kiss.

The following day, Pernella came into the drawing room.

"Dumbledore wishes to see you and Harry." She said. Nicolas looked at Harry, then turned to his wife.

"Let him in." He said. Nicolas then went to a cupboard which contained a stone, to which he made a few adjustments. "There – he won't be able to activate any portkeys or cast spells."

Pernella led Dumbledore in a few moments later.

"Harry my boy, how nice to see you well again, when I heard you were ill, I was most concerned." He said.

"Is this visit to do with the thing we discussed?" Nicolas asked.

"Yes it is," Dumbledore said. He turned to Harry, "You asked me last summer why Voldemort targeted your parents and I said it was not the time to tell you."

"You did," Harry said, "Are you here to tell me now?"

"I am. Nicolas reminded me that you have been through a lot and should be told the truth, rather than rely on speculation and garbled versions you may read in books." Dumbledore answered. "I beg you to let me tell my tale before you ask questions."

"Very well." Harry said. Everyone sat down.

"Your parents were both sorted into Gryffindor twelve years ago. While James loved Lily from the start, she couldn't stand him. He got into trouble along with his friends many times over the years until he decided to change his ways in order to start courting your mother. It worked and just after they finished at Hogwarts, they married.

"It was at this time, Voldemort was at the height of his powers. His agenda was to create a pureblood society, but purebloods were as much at risk – whole pureblood families were wiped out. The Ministry were turning very blood-thirsty, thanks to Barty Crouch, then Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. You are aware of the Unforgivable Curses? (Harry nodded) He authorised the use of them against suspected Death Eaters. I started an organisation called the Order of the Phoenix to help combat Voldemort and the Death Eaters and your parents joined it. They actually faced Voldemort many times and lived to tell the tale.

"Things were going downhill until 1980. The previous Divination teacher had just retired and on the urging of Professor McGonagall, I had seriously considered dropping it, there is no true way to become a Seer, you are born with the gift, but I was approached by a Sibyll Trelawney, who was the great-granddaughter of celebrated

Seer Cassandra Trelawney, so out of politeness, I met her at the Hogs Head pub in Hogsmeade. I was about to tell her that I was going to drop the subject when she went into a trace and delivered a prophecy. She said:

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... And the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ... The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies..." (OP 37).

"I speculated for days on what it meant until I discovered from a spy I had in Voldemort's ranks that one of his spies had overheard the first part. There are two children to who the prophecy could refer too – you and Neville Longbottom. Both your parents had defied Voldemort three times and you were both born at the end of July. At my urging, both your parents and the Longbottom family went into hiding. My spy informed me towards Halloween 1981 that Voldemort intended to strike. Someone had betrayed us and on that night, Voldemort killed your parents and tried to kill you, but it rebounded upon himself and destroyed his body."

"Hagrid said that in his opinion, there was not enough human left in him to die." Harry said.

"There comes the next part of my story Harry," Dumbledore said, "Based on what you told me about your encounter with Quirrel at Hogwarts. No witch or wizard can do what Voldemort did to Quirrel and the way you described his exit from Quirrel's body helped with some facts I had speculated upon."

"What are they?" Harry asked.

"There is a very dark piece of magic known as Horocrux," Dumbledore said, "When murder is committed, a person's soul can be split and stored in a particular object. If one of these items exist, then a particular witch or wizard cannot die. Yes, they can be expelled from a body but can survive in spirit form until another dark ritual takes place which will give that person a new body. Based on that encounter, I theorise that Voldemort created a Horocrux."

Nicolas stepped in. "We found out about it by chance. Someone slipped a diary belonging to a Tom Riddle to an unsuspecting student in Diagon Alley last summer. We came across it by chance and discovered it was a Horocrux. We later found out about other Horocruxes created by him and have destroyed the lot of them. Voldemort is now dead, for good."

"Why didn't you tell me?" Dumbledore asked, "I could have helped you."

"We had help of our own," Nicolas said, "I believe you have one more thing to tell Harry – why you placed him with those magic hating Muggles."

"When your mother sacrificed herself to save you, it created a bond which would protect you if you could call any place her blood flowed home. I thought you safe there and I admit I never checked up on you but I did go there at one point and told them never to let you leave the house for a year. I did this because the Death Eaters found out where you lived and attempted several kidnapping attempts which failed. I also added a ward so they would not harm you after an incident where Vernon Dursley nearly killed you."

Harry was beginning to look mad.

"Calm down Harry," Nicolas said.

"I admit I was in the wrong placing you there," Dumbledore said, "and I was wrong in trying to force you back there last summer. I wanted to keep you away from the spotlight. I abused your mothers sacrifice to keep you ignorant of our world until the time was right and to continue your ignorance during holiday time. I felt that you should stay far from our world as possible during then, just so the Dursleys wouldn't put you out on the streets. In doing so I made you a prisoner and I had to be reminded that your parents didn't sacrifice themselves only for you to be kept a prisoner and ignorant of our world. I did wrong by you and I ask that you forgive me, not now, but eventually. Finally, I give my oath that I will not try to force you back to Hogwarts but should you decide to come back, you will be welcome to return."

Dumbledore got up. "Good day to you all." Pernela led him away. Nicolas looked at Harry, not knowing what to say.

The following day, everyone gathered in the living room to give out presents. By special permission of Headmistress Frost, Hermione, Ron, Tracey, Daphne and Luna were also there. Molly and Arthur Weasley were there too. Sirius was also there along with Mac Taylor (Harry had invited him along to witness the potion being used).

Tracey took Harry aside after she arrived.

"I really like you Harry," she said going red (Harry did the same), "Would you like to come to the village with me on the next trip?" At Shamrock, second years upwards were allowed to go to the nearby village every couple of weeks. Tracey still considered him her 'knight in shining armour'.

He was unsure what to say but decided on what to say. "Yes, I'd be happy to come with you." He replied.

After everyone had arrived, Harry had presents piled in front of him which everyone expected him to open. Among his presents were another Weasley jumper, some books (please don't ask me to list them all), a Potions Master's kit from Mac Taylor, a broomstick servicing kit, some sweets and finally, some unusual items which Fred and George Weasley had invented.

Harry got a box out and gave it to Nicolas.

"I know you're dying and that your stocks of elixir of life is useless because the stone is destroyed," Harry said as Nicolas unwrapped the box and opened it, taking out two vials, "You can't just go and die now we've found each other and that we're properly related through my mother."

"What are these?" Nicolas asked.

"It's a potion I created with help from Mac Taylor from Shamrock along with a select few. In theory, it will make you a lot younger than current deaging potions will do and it will cure you of all ailments and it will allow you to retain your memories." Harry said, "For obvious reasons, I've had the formular locked up in Gringotts. I have no idea if it will work, but there is nothing to lose by trying."

"I'll drink it first," Nicolas said to his wife, "and if it works, you can drink it afterwards." He drank his vial. He stumbled about the room.

"I feel strange." He said. The observers could see clouds of energy flowing from his body, his skin actually glowing. Then he stood still and held his arms out, looked up and his body turned into flames. But the flames were controlled flames, exactly as Harry planned it. Everyone shielded their eyes as the light from the flames went very bright.

I know I promised this chapter would be uploaded on Christmas Eve, but there is a chance I might not be here to upload it so I'm uploading it now. A few points of clarification though – Fleur and Ginny's relationship is not fem!slash but good friends. Mac Taylor is based on the character of the same name in CSI: New York. To help the chapter flow better, I've repeated the last few paragraphs of Chapter 12.

Chapter Thirteen

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"It's a potion I created with help from Mac Taylor from Shamrock along with a select few. In theory, it will make you a lot younger than current de-aging potions will do and it will cure you of all ailments and it will allow you to retain your memories." Harry said, "For obvious reasons, I've had the formula locked up in Gringotts. I have no idea if it will work, but there is nothing to lose by trying."

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"I feel strange." He said. The observers could see clouds of energy flowing from his body, his skin actually glowing. Then he stood still and held his arms out, looked up and his body turned into flames. But the flames were controlled flames, exactly as Harry planned it. Everyone shielded their eyes as the light from the flames went very bright. As everyone looked on, Nicolas' appearance changed, he began to look younger. His looks changed from the 667 year old to a man in his early 50's. His beard vanished and a bit of colour reappeared in his hair. Then, the flames died away.

Nicolas conjured a mirror and looked at himself.

"It worked. I now look like what I did when I was 53," Nicolas said, "You've even got rid of all that arthritis I started to suffer from, I've never felt better in my life. Perenelle - you take it now."

Pernella took her potion and moments later, she too burst into flames and was made 610 years younger within minutes. But instead of Nicolas' pure orange flames, hers were multi-colour psychedelic colours. She gave Harry a hug after her change was finished.

"Thank you," she said.

"Yes, thank you Harry." Nicolas said.

"Well done Mr. Potter," Mac said, "A remarkable achievement. Now, we're going to have to speak to the Potions Journal about this. With Master Flamel's permission, I can have someone from that journal at Shamrock after your return."

"You deserve most of the credit too," Harry said.

"I barely did anything," Mac began.

"You supervised the creation of it, you encouraged the research and development of it, you finished it off when I was ill," Harry said, "Therefore, you deserve half the credit. Also, wouldn't you like to get one up on that Snape?"

"Looking at it that way, that does sound a very good idea," Mac said, "As soon as I return to Shamrock, I'll have the paperwork filled out ready to file with our Ministry and the International Confederation of Wizards. They can deal with the English Ministry, just in case someone tries to help Snape claim the credit."

"Thank you for the help you've given Harry with this." Nicolas said.

"It's no problem at all." Mac said, "I'm going to have to go now Harry, I've got a detention to supervise – some idiot tried to brew Polyjuice Potion in order to sneak into the girls dormitories. Read these books before you return then come to my office when you do." He gave Harry the titles of two books.

Three days later.

On his return to Shamrock, Harry went to Mac's office following a quick meeting with the Headmistress and a reunion with his friends.

"Right Mr. Potter," he said, "Did you read the material I suggested?"

"Yes," Harry said, "But they didn't seem second year material."

"No, but it's an idea of what's to come. The Headmistress has given me permission to sort this out today," he said, passing over a piece of paper, "I want you to brew these four potions. It's to help ensure your magical core is back to normal. The other teachers will be giving you refresher lessons over the next couple of days before you rejoin your regular classes."

Over the course of the day, Harry brewed a Draught of Living Death, Elixir to Induce Euphoria, Blood Replenishing Potion and finally a Fire Protection Potion.

Mac looked at each and everyone as Harry finished them.

"Excellent work," Mac said, "Take a break then you have the final part of your catch-up to do, which will be a piece of written work."

Harry left the office and went to the main hall where he got something to eat. Half an hour later, he returned to Mac's office where there were some papers ready for him. Three hours later, he had finished.

At Hogwarts, the post owls flew into the Great Hall to deliver the post. An owl dropped the latest Potions Journal in front of Snape who unrolled it and flipped through it, then suddenly, he spat out his drink.

"What on earth is the matter Severus?" McGonagall asked.

Spluttering and stammering, Snape pointed out the article which featured Harry and Mac. McGonagall took the magazine and read the article.

A NEW REJUVINATION POTION

It has come to our attention that student Harry Potter, 12 and Irish Potions Master McKenzie (Mac) Taylor (43) have come up with a new potion which rejuvenates the older person while curing them of all ailments and allows them to keep their memories.

Mr. Potter, a student at Shamrock in Ireland, got the idea for this potion when he found out that his many times great-grandfather and Master Nicolas Flamel was finally dying, his Philosopher's Stone being destroyed in an incident at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry last summer. He approached the Shamrock Potions Master, Mac Taylor, who promised to help him.

Mr. Potter, with help from others researched all similar potions and discovered elements that would enable the creation of a brand new potion.

"There are some ingredients that will cause a de-aging potion to take a set amount of years, to a maximum of thirty. By removing these and replacing them, then it is up to the person taking the potion to determine when he or she wants it to stop. The removal of aconite deals with the memory loss."

Mr. Potter and Professor Taylor have decided not to release the formula to the public because there is the potential for it to be used for dark purposes, but we at the Potions Journal have seen two Pensieve memories, verified to be the truth of the potion working and both Mr. Potter and Professor Taylor have sworn oaths that they created the potion.

Did it work? Nicolas Flamel and his wife Perenelle are now at the ages of 53 and 51 respectfully. We congratulate both Mr. Potter and Professor Taylor on a successful potion. They have promised that it will be useable by the general public, although each use will be accessed on a case-by-case basis.

"That brat doesn't have the intelligence to come up with a potion like that!" Snape said.

"You never gave him a chance," McGonagall said, "You wasted so much time deciding Mr. Potter was going to be like his father, you let revenge cloud your judgement. It wouldn't surprise me if you told Slytherin students to sabotage his potions too so you would have an

excuse to give him low marks. You must have seen the results of his new examinations which got him his new grades."

"But he didn't do too well in your subject either." Snape added.

"Because he was in fear for his life. Now he is away from those awful Muggles and is at a school" where he can be taught by people who don't have any bias towards or against his parents, he can thrive," McGonagall countered, "I hate to say it, but I think he is better off at Shamrock, where no-one cares about the whole Boy-Who-Lived thing."

"There are some people here who don't care about it." Snape countered.

"Like you," McGonagall said, "Tell me the truth. Draco Malfoy would threaten to set his father on anyone who disagreed with him. He would flaunt his family name and money about in order to get himself out of trouble. Harry Potter came here with no magical knowledge and barely knew his own legend. I've never seen him flaunt his title or use it to keep out of trouble or make friends. Granted, I talked Dumbledore into allowing him onto the Quidditch team, but that was due to skill, not his name. If Mr. Malfoy was in my house and I witnessed such skill, I would have pushed for him to join the team. Have you seen Mr. Potter flaunt his title in any way?"

Snape thought long and hard. "Draco's influence has fallen since his father was sent to prison. I've not yet told him that Lucius was found dead in his cell a few weeks ago, along with other convicted Death Eaters. Albus theorises that something must have happened to the spirit of the Dark Lord which also killed his followers. I am thankful he managed to suppress the Protean charm in my Dark Mark so nothing would happen. As for Potter, I've never seen him flaunt the title, his family name or anything. It personally surprised me that he would go about wearing clothes that barely fit him but I held my tongue, considering everyone else did."

"If I were you Severus," McGonagall suggested, "I'd write to Mr. Potter and offer to tell him a few stories of his mother, you knew her quite well. Sirius Black may be able to tell a few stories, but they would all be about James."

"I'll consider it." Snape said. In the end, he never did.

At Beaubatons, Ginny Weasley pointed her wand and cast a Bat Bogey Hex at Fleur Delacour. Moments later, Fleur started to feel the full effects of the hex and then cancelled it.

"Excellent stuff Ginevra," she said, "now, if those other girls give you any trouble, just give them a dose of this."

Ginny was still being bullied at the French school and most of it was being ignored by teachers although Headmistress Madam Maxime was doing her best to prevent it. In response, Fleur had decided to teach the younger girl a few hexes to help defend herself.

Their relationship was strong friendship although Fleur was more a mentor, teaching her things to help get her through the school, including the French language. She had to spend the Christmas holidays at the Delacour household when a terrorist attack by French wizards forced the French Ministry to seal their borders. The Delacours made her very welcome, she made another friend in Fleur's younger sister Gabrielle. Towards the end of the holidays, Mr. Delacour used his connections in the French Ministry to secure a special Portkey for Ginny to visit the Burrow for a day.

A few weeks later, Harry walked into the main hall with Tracey and Daphne accompanying him, mainly to give him a hand - three days before, he had an accident when having a go on his broom and broke his leg. Due to previous breaks not being healed properly and the dragon-pox, magical treatments wouldn't work so it had to be treated Muggle style.

Harry and the girls sat down at the table and started to have their breakfast (sorry food fans, I'm not describing breakfast). Hoots indicated that the post was ready to be delivered and owls flew into the hall. An owl flew towards Harry and dropped a letter in front of him. He picked it up and saw the seal of the Irish Ministry on it. Harry opened it and read it and promptly fainted. Tracey picked up the letter and had a look:

NASTLY EXHAUSTING WIZARDING TESTS

This is to certify that HARRY JAMES POTTER has achieved the following grade:

POTIONS: OUTSTANDING

Congratulations Mr. Potter, according to records, you are the youngest person to receive a NEWT grade, especially an Outstanding. The work you performed in creating the Rejuvenation Potion has accounted for 45% of your grade.

Daphne woke Harry up and helped him sit back up.

"Congratulations Harry." She said. Hermione came over to them.

"Well done." She said, with a bit of jealousy in her voice. Mac came over, having heard the conversation.

"Congratulations Mr. Potter." He said.

"You arranged this," Harry said, "Those catch-up potions and the paper - they were NEWT level material."

"I won't admit or deny anything Mr. Potter," Mac said, with a slight laugh, "You can choose to attend my Potions classes or if you wish, I can give you some stuff to study instead."

"I'll continue to attend your classes please Professor," Harry said, "I'd give anything to see the look on Snape's face when he finds out about this result."

The staff at Hogwarts already knew about the result. Nicolas had informed McGonagall who told the rest of the staff.

"If you hadn't kept bullying Mr. Potter," Professor Flitwick said, "You could have earned the credit for his NEWT grade and he might have worked with you on that Rejuvenation Potion."

"Don't remind me." Snape said. He knew there was no chance of offering to pass down his knowledge since Nicolas Flamel had greater Potions knowledge than he had. He also knew Mac Taylor was better at Potions than he was.

"Will we be right in assuming this will not be making the papers?" Professor Spout asked.

"Nicolas Flamel has informed me that this grade will not be in the news. The reason why he allowed the article about the new potion was because it was a major development and to help prevent suspicion when he escorts Mr. Potter to various locations."

Ron was in big trouble. He was in a meeting with Headmistress Frost along with his parents and Great-Aunt Muriel.

"As it happens, Ronald's marks are terrible. His homework is barely readable and he doesn't seem to want to participate in class activity. His spell-work is dreadful, it's worse than a first year's," Frost said, "if it keeps up, then we will have to consider expelling him from Shamrock. IF he promises to work hard, with a tutor and does well at the end of year exams, then he will be permitted to continue."

"What's the point if Charlie's old wand is close to falling to pieces?" Ron asked, "Harry offered to buy me a new wand but you wouldn't let him. He keeps offering to get me one at least twice a week."

"I strongly recommend you get your son a new wand." Frost said, "If your Ministry finds out he's been expelled from school after being withdrawn from Hogwarts, they will have the power to bind Ronald's magic, modify his memories and send him to live with Muggles."

In the end, Ron was brought a new wand from Ollivanders.

Before long, it was time for the next trip to the local village, about half a mile away from the school. It was a small magical village, about half the size of Hogsmeade (which Harry had never been to). He took Tracey's hand and walked with her, with his friend giving the occasional bit of support - he wasn't going to let a broken leg stop him from going to the village.

They explored the small number of shops, one of which was a very small branch of Flourish and Blotts (anything they didn't have could be ordered from the London branch). Harry ordered a book on the Peverell brothers, wanting to find out more. He also brought a copy of The Tales of Beedle the Bard, having been told there was a story about the three in the book.

At the local sweet shop, he brought Tracey some of her favourite chocolates and eventually, they went to a pub and ordered two bottles of butterbeer, which neither of them had tried before.

"Don't you find it peaceful, not having the rivalry between houses like at Hogwarts?" Tracey asked.

"Yes I do," Harry answered, "It's a good change not having to put up with Malfoy sprouting his rubbish on how purebloods are better than everyone else and that half-bloods and Muggleborns are nothing better than slaves."

"My family never brought into that crap," Tracey said, "Just think, if we were still in Hogwarts, we might not be able to do what we're doing now. Draco Malfoy wouldn't allow it. He'd be in touch with his father faster than someone on a Nimbus 2000."

"I think he's lost all his power at Hogwarts right now," Harry began, "According to my godfather's cousin, Lucius Malfoy was found dead in his cell at Azkaban along with other marked Death Eaters."

"Really?" Tracey asked, "How come it never made the Prophet?"

"No idea, you would have thought that the death of Death Eaters would make the papers. My cousin only knows because she's an Auror and was part of a team raiding the Malfoy Manor. It seems dear Lucius' solicitors had blocked them from searching it before when he was arrested but upon his death, his wife, another cousin of my godfather, let them in and search to their hearts' content. I believe they confiscated numerous dark objects along with undeclared money. I heard there were items there that Arthur Weasley would have given his wife and children to find, just to get Lucius in prison. Apparently, without Lucius, Narcissia Malfoy has gone to Sirius, begging him to dissolve her marriage to Lucius, which she wanted out of a long time ago."

"Did he do it?" Tracey asked.

"No idea," Harry answered, "Anyhow, enough of the Malfoys. Let's think of more positive things. How does a pureblood child get raised - do they go to school to learn things?"

"We're normally taught at home by our parents, mainly due to the risks of Muggles witnessing accidental magic. There was talk a year or two ago about opening a school similar to the Muggle primary schools but it fell through." She answered.

"Wish I'd known about this - I would have gladly gone to a family to learn. I accidentally turned my teacher's hair blue and either flew or apparated onto the school roof. Luckily, none of it was attributed to magic, but I got into huge trouble over both incidents, although how they got the idea it was me who turned the teacher's hair blue beats me to this day. Also, two summers ago, I made the glass in the snake house at a zoo vanish and this huge snake decided to have some fun with my cousin Dudley. I'd only wish he'd bitten the bullying git."

"Harry! That's not a nice thing to say."

"A snake bite is tame compared to what he's done to me. Three years ago, he nearly killed me when he stabbed me at school. I was lucky the teachers got help and I was in surgery before my aunt and uncle found out, otherwise I wouldn't have been saved. Vernon bribed his way out of trouble."

"I'm sorry." Tracey said.

"Don't be - I don't have to stay with them anymore."

"How about this," Tracey suggested, "When we're old enough, why don't we try to revive the primary school idea? If Fudge is still in office, you could try to convince him to allow it to happen, or if anyone else is Minister, try using your name to make it happen."

"That's a very good idea," Harry said, "I've never liked my fame or the idea of exploiting it, but if it helps others, I'm in for it."

The two walked back to the school (well, Tracey supported him).

"I enjoyed this, we'll have to do it again sometime." Harry said, kissing Tracey on the cheek.

"We'll have too." Tracey said.

There we have it, the final chapter of The Apprentice. I had always intended for it to last the course of a single year but some ideas were spur of the moment ones. Watch out for the unexpected guest appearance at the end. I'm working on a rewrite of The Holy Grail and The Traitors but I'm also working on Living in Darkness and A Year at Hogwarts.

Chapter Fourteen

Dumbledore read the article in the Potions Journal again and considered things said to him. Would Harry bear that much of a grudge against him to refuse to allow him to buy some potion? The article did state that each request would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. He also realised that using his political clout to help Snape gain credit for potions created by Mac Taylor would work against him.

He then realised that he had to ask for it in the right way. Harry and Mac Taylor might be willing to sell him some potion if he asked in the right way ? he could claim to plan to become a reformed character. He took a roll of parchment out and wrote the letter.

Harry received the letter the following day. He met up with Mac Taylor after lessons finished that day (he didn't have Potions that day).

"He's up to something." Harry said, "I bet you anything he'll try to duplicate it and make himself a hero over it."

"That'll never work," Mac said, "Everyone knows you created the potion.."

"With your help." Harry said.

"and so his attempts to mass-produce it will fail." Mac answered.

"What do you think we should do?" Harry asked.

"Let's give him a vial, but we add a timing charm to the vial for it and the contents to vanish if any spells are done. That way, the potion will be safe from attempts to analyse and copy it." Mac sorted out the vial and sent it to Dumbledore.

That weekend, Tracey and Harry met up with Hermione in the library. They told her their idea about the magical primary school and they were planning to begin research for it.

"That's an excellent idea," Hermione said, "I'll be glad to help you."

The trio got various books out to study the laws required.

"I just thought of something," Harry said, "What would happen if Muggles who were unaware of magic saw it being performed?"

"According to father," Tracey said, "A group of people would come along and wipe their memories of the incident and the witch or wizard would be fined."

"That's strange," Harry said, "Remember those incidents I told you about – the teachers involved still remembered them, it worked against me in the end of year reports. Vernon enjoyed that one – it was one when it was lousy compared to Dudley."

"Then someone circumvented the law to allow it to go without investigation or incident." Tracey said.

"What does the law say about placing a witch or wizard with Muggle relatives?" Hermione asked.

Tracey looked through one of the books. "If they come from a magical family, then they are to go to a person named in a will. If there is no-one named, then efforts are to be made to find a magical relative. They are sent to Muggles as a last resort, and only after character checks."

"So, if the law was followed, they would have found out that Vernon and Petunia were unsuitable, being known magic haters. When Hagrid delivered my letter, Petunia expressed her hatred for both my mother and magic while Vernon declared his intention to prevent me from being magical, practically confessing to using violence to do so." Harry countered.

"That is serious," Tracey said, "By law, if a member of the Ministry or Hogwarts staff hears a Muggle state that he or she would use violence on a magical child, then it has to be reported. Even though

Hagrid is the gamekeeper and Keeper of the Keys, he still qualifies as a member of Hogwarts staff."

"It's the same in the Muggle world." Hermione said, "My mother did a check-up on this young girl who came into their surgery one day and discovered evidence of abuse and was duty bound to report it."

"How were you introduced to the magical world?" Tracey asked.

"Professor McGonagall delivered my letter, explained things to us, did a demonstration, took us to Diagon Alley and there was a huge orientation event where we were introduced to magic. After a tour of Diagon Alley, our Muggle money was converted and the wands, school books, etc were purchased. Before we made our way home, McGonagall explained how to get onto Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$'s." Hermione answered.

"Hagrid found me after Vernon took the four of us to an island to escape the letters. He explained a few things, took me to Diagon Alley, got money out of my trust vault, purchased the equipment then dropped me back with the Dursleys without telling me how to get onto the platform. I wouldn't have known how to unless Mrs. Weasley told me and I only knew she and her family were magical because they were going about the Muggle area talking about Muggles and the platform." Harry added, "How's this – we add an orphanage for magical children to the plan."

"What's an orphanage?" Tracey asked.

"It's a place where children without parents are sent if there is nowhere else to send them. Vernon's sister Marge kept wanting to send me to one." Harry said.

The rest of the afternoon was spent making their plans. They knew that they would have to wait until after they finished school before they could put them into effect.

A few weeks later, the next village trip was under way. Harry was walking with Tracey to one of the shops when Nicolas stopped him.

"Sorry to interrupt your date (Harry and Tracey went red), but you're needed for an urgent meeting on the mainland." Nicolas said.

"It's alright Harry, you can find me when you get back." Tracey said.

"Hold tight." Nicolas said, taking hold of Harry and disappearing.

The two reappeared outside of a Muggle bank.

"What are we doing here?" Harry asked.

"It'll be explained to you inside." Nicolas said. They went to a receptionist - Nicolas told her that they had an appointment. They were led to the bank manager's office.

"Mr. Harry Potter?" the Manager asked. Harry nodded. "This is Mr. Gerald, solicitor to a Mr. Vernon Dursley." Harry shook hands, being polite.

"Why have I been called here?" Harry asked.

"As you know, my client was sentenced to fifty years in jail, mostly for tax evasion and all his assets were confiscated. He is staging an appeal against his sentence. However, Legal Aid refused to finance it." Mr. Gerald said.

"What has it to do with me?" Harry asked, "I don't even have any money in this bank."

"I beg to differ there Mr. Potter," the Bank Manager said, "Your mother, Lily Potter-Evans created this account when you were born and deposited £50,000 straight away from your father's family estate. It was supposed to see you through college and university. Two weeks ago, Mr. Vernon Dursley sent me a letter authorising the withdrawal of all the funds from this account to cover his legal fees. It lacked two things - the authorisation and your signature. I was the one who set up this account on behalf of you and your mother and I was told never to let anyone with the name of Dursley withdraw anything."

"After Mr. Dursley informed me that the bank refused to release the funds, he contacted me. He wants to take legal action against you in order to get these funds, citing the amount of money they spent on you for ten years." Mr. Gerald said.

"He barely spent anything on me except some second-hand glasses that cost him £2. My clothes were my cousin Dudley's hand-me-downs which were mostly damaged. I was fed next to nothing and with me at their home, they had a slave, which I know for a fact is illegal. School was conditional on my finishing my jobs! I was even withheld medical treatment. If anything, they owe ME money for all the work I did for them." Harry countered. He then turned to the bank manager, "If this goes to court, what are Vernon's chances of winning?"

"When your mother opened this account for you, Vernon Dursley was under investigation for fraud but the charges were mysteriously dropped. Because of his current convictions for fraud, embezzlement, tax evasion and the abuse of yourself, no judge in the UK would award him your money." The manager said.

"Well," Harry turned to Mr. Gerald, "You can tell your client that he is not getting his hands on my money and if he tries to sue me for it, then I will file a countersuit demanding compensation for what he and his family did to me for ten years." Harry stood up. "Pleased to meet you," he said to the Bank Manager, "I've got to get back to school - if we can arrange a meeting at some point to discuss the account, I will be happy to attend. Thank you."

"I will arrange the appointment with Mr. Flamel, but today's appointment was essential." The manager said.

Nicolas took Harry back to the village where he found Tracey and took her for a drink.

"What's happening?" she asked.

"Just my uncle wanting me to help get him out of jail." Harry said, explaining about the meeting.

"Can he get your money?" she asked.

"According to the bank manager, no." He said, "so it looks like he's going to be in prison for a very long time."

The floo doorbell rang at the Flamel household a few days later and Perenelle went to the fire. She then called out for Nicolas as she let Mr. Davies in.

"Michael Davies," Mr. Davies said, holding out his hand, "I'm Tracey's father. I wanted to have a word with you about your charge."

"Harry? Is there something wrong?" Nicolas asked.

"Not with Harry, my daughter speaks very well of him, especially when he saved her from that Lockhart person. It's something to do with some papers I've found in my family vault."

"Go ahead." Nicolas said.

"I was looking through said papers when I found an old marriage contract between a male Potter and a female member of my family. However, until now, there's never been a pair to make this contract valid. I'm not a believer in forced marriages but before I do anything with this, I need your views on the matter." Mr. Davies said.

"Well, I'm from a time when they were common, but I believe in giving Harry the choice. With how he and your daughter are getting along, we might not need one." Nicolas said.

"I was hoping you would say this. I, Michael Davies hereby revoke the marriage contract between the Houses of Potter and Davies." He said. The parchment he was holding burst into flames and was quickly destroyed.

As the rest of the year continued, Harry and Tracey's relationship progressed. They had not got to the dating stage yet but he was planning to ask her soon. Neither Dumbledore or Snape attempted to make contact with Harry.

Two weeks after the exams, the Weasleys were summoned back to Shamrock.

"I have your son's exam results here," Professor Frost said, "and it appears he has failed every subject except for Charms."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Weasley looked at Ron with shock in their faces. None of their children had done so badly before, not even the twins.

"He's received tutoring from various students and he's had help from teachers, but it just won't sink in." Frost said, "There is one way to save his magic."

"What is that?" Mr. Weasley asked.

"Send him to a magical summer school and then enlist him at a school where there is no Quidditch to keep him distracted." Frost suggested, "It's got to the point where he has to be assigned detention on Quidditch match days so he'll do homework."

Mrs. Weasley glared at Ron with one of her trademark looks.

"Is there anywhere you can suggest?" she asked.

"There is one called Cadman School of Remedial Magic - it's in America. I'll have to write a letter to them to request a placement for Ronald. The school is run free of charge. The other thing I can suggest is for him to specialise in a particular subject and work towards getting an apprenticeship himself. Looking at his marks, and his Hogwarts records, he is best at Charms while Potions is his worst subject, although it's slightly improved since coming here. I understand that Ronald used the levitation charm to help knock out a full grown mountain troll?"

"Yes." He said.

"The rest of his charms work is excellent, it's the only topic in which he is averaging an O right now when it comes to the spellwork, with the written work, it's averaging a T. With the right coaching, he can become a master in next to no time."

Mrs. Weasley looked as if she was going to spit razor blades at her son.

"Don't be mad Mrs. Weasley," Frost said, "The problem Ron has is lack of confidence. He's got five brothers he feels he needs to be as good as otherwise he'd feel inadequate. He needs to become his own man without being pressured to follow in his brother's footsteps or to get good enough grades to join the Ministry. We'll see how he gets on with Charms over the holidays and if he does well, I will be prepared to accept him back on probation after the holidays, provided he puts more effort into his work and improves his grades

to at least an A, if not E. There is another thing - Ron also seems to be a chess master - there is a tournament in the Muggle world this summer, normally lasting two weeks. You should enter Ron for it and see how well he does. From what I understand, none of his brothers are any good at the game."

The two Weasley adults met up with the Flamels later that day.

"Do you know someone who can take Ron on as an apprentice?" Mr. Weasley asked. It seemed the Flamels knew most people who were taking on apprentices.

"As it happens," Perenelle said, "I've been wanting to take on an apprentice. I was a Charms Mistress years ago. I'll take him on and by the time I'm done, Ron'll be a Charms Master."

"Thank you." Mr. Weasley said.

The reason why there was no contact with Dumbledore was because of an unfortunate side effect of the potion. Dumbledore had put in an additional element to record the ingredients used, which was a bad idea. He drank it and the effect was the same as with the Flamels. Dumbledore burst into flames. But he had taken other steps to try and prolong his life, for the greater good. But before the potion could start to work, it blended in with the other potions and rituals Dumbledore had used and as the flames died away, he started to crumble into dust. His clothing fell to the ground.

In her office, Professor McGonagall felt control of Hogwarts being transferred to her. She went to Dumbledore's office and saw the remains of her old friend on the floor.

Harry heard of Dumbledore's death a couple of days later. He met up with Mac after the Potions lesson to discuss things.

"Was it our potion that did this?" Harry asked.

"Partially," Mac said, "I've heard he did various things in order to prolong his life, including a number of dark rituals. I theorise that when used in conjunction with those rituals, the potion tried to counteract them, but they fought back and eventually killed him. Don't blame yourself Harry, he would have died when the dark rituals wore off."

Harry was called to Headmistress Frost's office the following day where he found two people waiting for him along with Nicolas.

"This is Alberforth Dumbledore and the Dumbledore family solicitor." Frost said. Harry shook hands and everyone sat down.

"First of all Mr. Potter," Alberforth began, "I don't blame you for my brother's death. I've gone through his papers and they detail some really dark rituals he went through in order to extend his life. I believe he wanted to use your potion to rid his system of the dark potions but in turn the dark items killed him."

The solicitor stepped in. "Professor Dumbledore left you a number of items in his will. First, he leaves you the Golden Snitch you caught in your first match at Hogwarts, and hopes it will be the first of many you catch as a Seeker, in all the years he's watched Quidditch games, he's never seen anyone like you, your father and Charlie Weasley."

"Thank you." Harry said, "I don't get why Dumbledore would want to leave me anything though."

"Contrary to what you may think Mr. Potter," Alberforth began, "Albus knew you well before he sent you to the Dursleys. He was a frequent visitor to your parents' home and babysat you a few times."

"Why didn't he say anything?" Harry asked.

"Would you admit something like that happened when your pupil began attending school - there might be accusations of favouritism." The solicitor said.

"Albus was always one for keeping things in the past," Alberforth said, "Yes, he let Snape get away with favouritism but he claims it was to help Snape maintain cover as a Death Eater spy."

The solicitor continued, "His second bequest to you is this photo album."

The solicitor handed a book over, it was similar to one Hagrid had given Harry at the end of his first year of Hogwarts. Looking through

it, it had many pictures of Harry as a baby with his parents and many funny shots of baby Harry with Dumbledore.

"Despite his attempts to keep you at the Dursleys, you did mean a lot to him," the solicitor said, "he only wanted to keep you safe from Death Eater retaliation for what you did to You-Know-Who. Some Death Eaters tried to set up marriage contracts involving you, but he blocked them at every corner. There are two final bequests - he leaves you these Pensieve memories. They contain many memories of your parents when they went to Hogwarts. Finally, he is leaving you his extensive research notes on the Dark Lord. Because you had the most impact involving him, Dumbledore felt it was fitting you receive these notes."

"Thank you," Harry said after being given the items. Frost signed the papers as a witness. Nicolas did the same as Harry's guardian.

"If you would like a minute," Frost said as Harry looked at his inheritance, "we can leave."

"It's alright," Harry said, "there's nothing here that is secret. I'll take a look at it later after classes. Thank you."

He left the office, having to go to the Charms lesson. After the classes, he took a few of the items and went to the Shamrock version of the Great Hall and looked over them while eating. Members of his group joined him.

"What are they?" Tracey asked him.

"Dumbledore's research notes involving Voldemort. It goes back to his first meeting with the then Tom Riddle back in 1938. He felt I should receive them, just because I survived his attempt to kill me." He answered.

None of the others knew what to say.

Before long, it was the end of term. Harry, Tracey, Daphne and Hermione all passed with very high marks. There was a meeting between the group on the last day.

"Do we come back here?" asked Harry, "or return to Hogwarts?"

"Come back here." All three girls said with Tracey adding, "Where you go, I go."

"We've gotten a better education by being here," Hermione added, "None of this purebloods are better than anyone else rubbish, no Snape being bias."

"No inter-house rivalries," Daphne added, "Who would have thought that two Gryffindors and two Slytherins would be the best of friends? None of it would have been allowed at Hogwarts."

Two days later, there was a party being held at the Flamels. The Weasley, Greengrass, Davies and Granger families were there along with Luna, Sirius and Tonks.

"One year ago, Harry here agreed to become my apprentice. In that time, he has learnt a lot and has exceeded my expectations, especially when he created the Rejuvenation Potion with the help of Mac Taylor at Shamrock," Nicolas said. He put a Pensive on the table, "Here are some highlights of his work."

He tapped the Pensieve and memories started playing, including the incident where Harry put too much power into a summoning charm and forced a cake to fly into Nicolas' face. Everyone laughed at that memory.

"Now, it seems I owe you for that one Harry." Nicolas said. Pernella had brought in another homemade chocolate cake. Using a banishing charm, it went flying and hit Harry in the face. Everyone started laughing again, even Harry laughed.

"When it turned out that with the destruction of my stone which meant our stocks of Elixar were useless, I decided to teach Harry to create his own stone, mainly so the knowledge wouldn't die away," Nicolas said, "Today marks the final phase in the creation of the stone - he removes it from its potion." He left the room for a moment and came back carrying a cauldron. Harry put on a pair of dragon hide gloves and put his hand in the cauldron, which was filled with a red liquid. He took it out and in his hand was a transparent red stone.

Nicolas passed Harry a white plate from the table and Harry touched it with the stone. It instantly turned into gold. Everyone started clapping.

"Well done Harry." Nicolas said, "But this is not the end of your apprenticeship, I have many more things to teach you."

Mr. Granger stepped forward. "We have some news to announce too. Today, we received the adoption papers for Luna here." There was another round of applause. Mr. Granger later told Harry that Xenophilius Lovegood died earlier in the year due to his excessive alcohol drinking and as a result, they decided to adopt Luna.

The celebration went on into the night. During the party, Harry plucked up the courage to go up-to Tracey and the two shared their first kiss.

For their work in creating the potion, Harry and Mac Taylor were nominated for 'Potion Makers of the Year' and 'Most Inventive Potion' awards by the Potions Journal. Although they won both awards, Harry refused to collect the awards in person, getting Mac to do it instead. Snape scowled as Mac collected the award.

Harry's apprenticeship lasted another two years - Nicolas had taught him everything that he could teach him. By then, the family had relocated to Ireland permanently. On hearing that Ireland weren't prejudicial regarding Muggle-borns, Harry took on a young Muggle-born student as an apprentice once he finished school.

After five years of dating, Harry finally plucked up the courage to ask Tracey to marry him, which she accepted. They were married two years later. After their wedding and honeymoon, they continued to develop their idea of developing a magical primary school and orphanage. During their research, they learnt that in England, only children from big pureblood families met other children during their upbringing before Hogwarts and that association outside of Hogwarts during holiday time wasn't normally encouraged unless they were from a major pureblood family.

Harry spent a lot of money preparing the school and when he presented the idea to the Irish Ministry, they gave him the green light and it was opened a year later. Nicolas took on the job of headmaster of the school. Four years later, Harry and Tracey's first child - a girl called Miranda started at the school, later going onto Shamrock when she was 11. He and Mac Taylor collaborated on many other potions, including a new version of Wolfsbane. It was

through this that he met another one of his father's friends – Remus Lupin.

Incidentally, Vernon Dursley managed to find finance for his appeal but lost.

Ron flourished as Perenelle's apprentice and did become a Charms master, finding fame on his own.

Ginny ended up living in France after graduating from Beauxbatons, working with the Delacour family. She married a French wizard before embarking on a successful Quidditch career for French squads.

Nicolas and Pernella died just over a hundred years later – they turned down the chance to retake the Rejuvenation Potion as they felt they had their time and it was time for them to die.

THE END